

# The Paper

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## Parliamentary pash protest a success

BOBBY Z

Militant pashtivists from the Spin The Bottle Bloc, the Axis of Weevils, the Class Whore Bloc and the Booty Bloc hailed simultaneous games of spin the bottle held inside and outside NSW State Parliament, on Wednesday 20 November, a great success. "Some would call it civil disobedience, but civility had nothing to do with it," boasted Spin The Bottle Bloc member Morris Day. "We have taken direct action to defend our democratic right to snog where and when we like!"

The highly improbably sequence of events leading to this action began when NSW Police Minister, Michael Costa, discovered the minutes to a No-WTO spokescouncil. There, groups from around the country announced their plans for November's mini-ministerial. One of these was the Spin The Bottle Bloc who, as their name implies, intended to organise a giant game of spin the bottle in opposition to the WTO. The Spin The Bottle Bloc's contribution was recorded, succinctly, in the widely distributed minutes: "Organising a mass action game of spin the bottle for November 14/15".

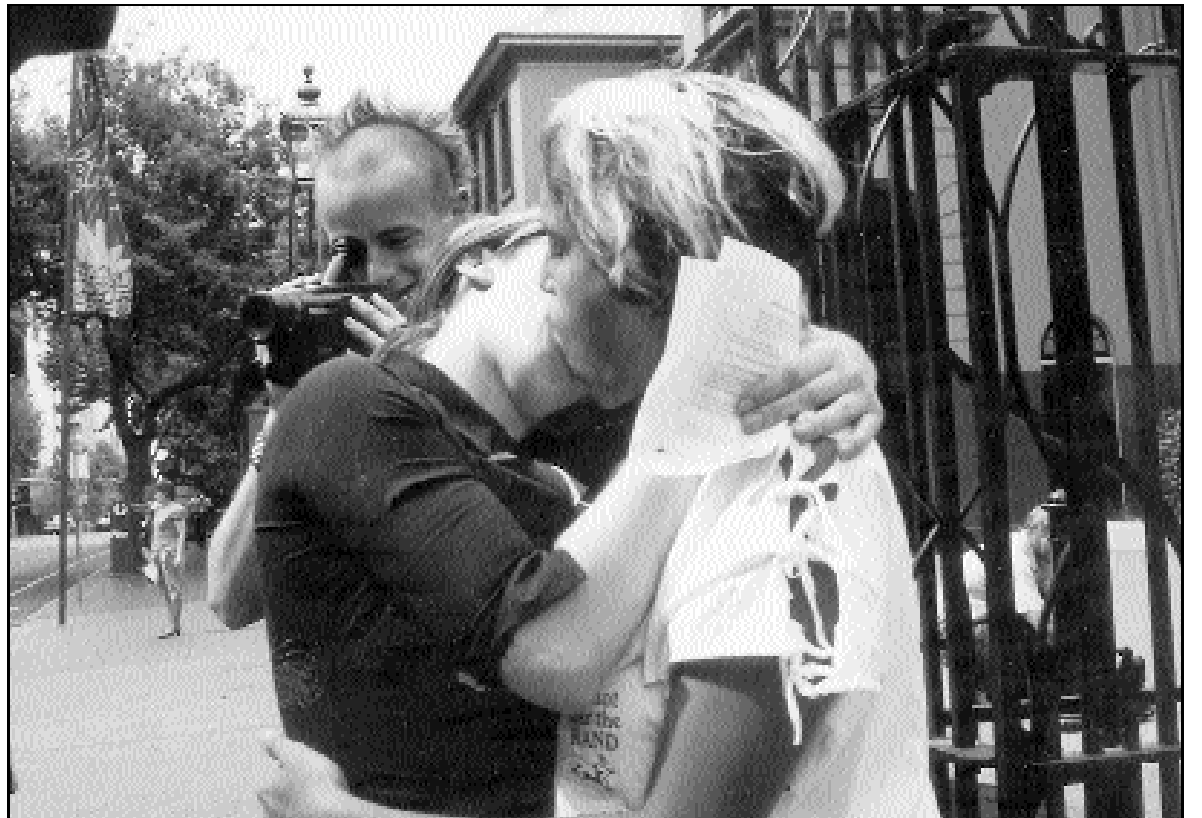
Following violent clashes between police and protestors at the WTO protests on the fourteenth, Costa tried to interpret these minutes for Parliament. "It is all in very brief form," he explained, "obviously because they know that somebody like me might get on the web and have a look at these things. But the code is not all that good, because you can piece it all together." In fact, the code was not all that good because it wasn't a code: they were just minutes. But Costa took obvious pride in his cryptographic abilities, and soon turned his attention to the "intriguing" question, "what is 'spin the bottle'?"

The Police Minister had never been invited to play (for obvious reasons) and didn't realise that spin the bottle is a popular teen kissing game. Instead, he offered those sinister code words, 'spin the bottle', as his one and only example of "disturbing threats of vio-

lence" which demanded a harsh police response. Liberally and inaccurately paraphrasing the Spin The Bottle Bloc's call to action, Costa explained to Parliament: "Spin the bottle takes the form of a blockade. The spin the bottle blockade takes on the WTO in a no-holds-barred fight to the finish. And you can join them. I will not read the rest of it, but it goes on to say: We invite you to join us for the most militant game of spin the bottle ever attempted - turning up the heat until every kiss becomes a molotov... [Protestors] have defined what spin the bottle is in postings on the Internet. They have come here for violent confrontation..."

Jill Jones, a member of the Bloc, responded by saying the idea that spin the bottle is a "violent confrontation" is absurd. "In context, the use of words like 'molotov' was obviously a joke, a metaphor. A metaphor, for the police minister's benefit, is when you use words in a symbolic rather than a literal way. For example, when we say we've been laughing our arses off at Michael Costa, we do not actually mean that our bottoms have fallen from our bodies."

Originally, the Spin The Bottle Bloc were planning to play outside ACM as part of the city-based actions of the fourteenth – in an attempt to connect the desire for free movement with the free movement of desire. This plan was scuttled when the paint on the giant bottle failed to dry in time. Ever adaptable, the Bloc had soon decided to take their game right to the Olympic site in Homebush



Pash Bloc, marrying the desire for free movement with the free movement of desire

—PHOTO: J BENTON

were the WTO delegates were meeting the next day. This plan was foiled when police confiscated their six-foot bottle prop (a flimsy mess of chicken wire, sticky tape and green paint which barely stood up unsupported). "The most dangerous thing about that bottle was that you might have to pash someone who hadn't showered in a few days," said Day.

The Spin The Bottle Bloc were not going to take all this lying down. Over the next few days they called in friends and accomplices and, on Wednesday, took their protest to Parliament House. Around forty exceptionally attractive anti-capitalists gathered outside and four made their way in to the public gallery. As her comrades did what came naturally, Apollonia Kotero of the Class Whore Bloc spoke eloquently to the honourable members below: "Mister Speaker! Mister Speaker, if I could draw your attention to my kissing companions. Is this an ex-

pression of violence, as suggested by Police Minister Michael Costa? I ask you, is this an act of aggression towards one's fellows, or an expression of joy and humanity?"

Wendy and Lisa, two of the spunky young revolutionaries ejected from Parliament for their public display of affection, were outraged. "Just the other week [Sydney's right wing tabloid] the Daily Telegraph was telling us this is 'our house'. If it's our house we should be allowed to snog in it to our hearts' content." Instead, these four courageous radicals were banned from Parliament House for life. "We were shocked," said Wendy. "It's not often the government rewards you for protesting."

As these radical herobiscuits emerged from the bland architecture of the NSW Parliament, spin the bottle began in earnest. The "ungovernable desire" the Orange Bloc had promised during WTO protests circulated freely, and ac-

tivists dedicated a rousing rendition of Tony Basil's classic, "Mickey", to Mickey Costa. "Oh Mickey what a pity, you don't understand..." Once again, karaoke has shown the way forward for proletarian politics.

The Class Whore Bloc have pointed out that Costa made a grave mistake in assuming Spin The Bottle's intentions were anything but carnal. But while the foot Michael Costa put in his mouth may have trumped the tongues in activist cheeks, the Police Minister was right to be scared. "These lips, these hips are clearly a threat to global capital," said Day. "But bringing out the police horses last Thursday was a little excessive."

# The Paper

Welcome to the final edition for 2002. We'll be taking a break in January 2003 so the next edition will be out early February. Thanks to all who supported The Paper over the last year.

**The Paper** is produced in Melbourne by a group of volunteers. It's not aligned with any political party and welcomes items on any issues that are misrepresented or ignored by the corporate press. The opinions expressed in **The Paper** are not necessarily those of the editors.

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# Goolengook's old growth forests

SHELLY NUNDRRA

In 1991, scientists employed by the Victorian government concluded that the Goolengook old growth forest area was so biologically significant that it should never be logged. Its Gondwanic ecosystems, rainforests, flora and fauna are irreplaceable.

On World Environment Day 1997, the Victorian government sent the bulldozers into this pristine valley in East Gippsland, breaking up a six month blockade, and destroying 90 hectares in the heart of the rainforest. Many of the trees were laid waste on the ground, while up to 90 percent of those taken went to the export woodchip mill in Eden. It was later proven in court that some areas had been illegally logged from reserves. The then Liberal environment minister, Marie Tehan, promptly changed the legislation rather than reserving an equivalent area in compensation.

Since then conservationists have blockaded Goolengook constantly, keeping the chainsaws at bay up until early 2002. On March 5th, in a climate of panicky political expedience, Steve Bracks' DNRE (Department of Natural Resources and Environment) stormed fortress Goolengook – home to the blockade. In the following weeks, close to two million dollars of public funds were wasted excluding public wit-

nesses and media, and ordering hundreds of police to (unsuccessfully) quell all legitimate peaceful protest. Royalties returned from this costly military style operation were reportedly less than AUS\$200,000. Over six weeks around 80 people were arrested trying to prevent more forests in the heart of this ancient icon from being ripped down for woodchips. The surviving forest was once again left to

issue to the voting public. They made a spate of gimmicks disguised as promises to sweeten to the swinging Green vote. "Goolengook logging stopped," claimed the headlines. On further investigation the finer print revealed that infact a small portion of Goolengook may be reserved, in exchange for another (probably equally important) forest to be logged - a scenario categorically rejected by the

as they wish, bodge or ignore recommendations, and break environment promises - as they did last election.

Announcements on an end to logging in the Otways, and an end to woodchipping in the Wombat were tentatively welcomed, but not beyond suspicion. Otways logging may not end for another six years, whilst volumes lost from there and the Wombat will be gleaned from the Central Highlands (Melbourne's water supply) and Gippsland. Labor's promise to rule out the burning of native forests for charcoal production and power generation is good news, but unfortunately woodchipping is escalating. An announcement on protecting Old Growth Forests – an issue close to the public's hearts – has so far been glaringly absent. Old growth forests are being cleared at an unprecedented rate in East Gippsland. With them go the critical habitat for many endangered or rare species, as well as some of the state's purest water sources, and important tourism spots.

The political chameleon changes its colors according to pressure, not conscience. Labour was momentarily flashing Green but Steve Bracks will have to announce deeper solutions to the forest crisis if he wants conservation credibility.

*Shelley Nundra writes on behalf of the Goongerah Environment Centre (GECO).*



PHOTO: ELI GREIG

Labor's promise to rule out the burning of native forests for charcoal production and power generation is good news, but unfortunately woodchipping is escalating.

stand silent and shocked in the wake of the frenzy.

Three weeks before the Victorian state election, Labor decided Green preferences were essential to their success, and admitted forests were a key

environment movement. This all hinges on the outcome of a VEAC (Victorian Environment Assessment Council) investigation, to be held next year. The election will be safely out of the way by then, and Labor can do

# WTO – trading away our rights

ADAM FENDERSON

I see spam in my mailbox advertising portable factories in shipping containers. I don't exactly feel in a financial position to buy one, (although I have access to technology which makes me one of the luckier ones in a global sense) but I imagine you can take the factories to the country with the lowest environmental standards or with the cheapest and most demoralized labor, where you can pad out your fortune, ready to pack up and leave for a better deal whenever it suits your bottom line.

Three years have passed since the Seattle protests woke the Western/Northern world up to these kind of practices being given legal precedence over local interests through the World Trade Organisation. The people of the east/south were of course already more acutely aware.

The WTO now encounters protests wherever it converges around the world. So it meets in fortified locations like the desert monarchy of Qatar. Last month, a WTO mini-ministerial of 25 trade ministers met behind 3km of steel and concrete barricades at Homebush Stadium in Sydney. To make the location more inaccessible for protesters train stations were closed and buses stopped running around the site.

Protesters were forced to walk 3km from the nearest station to find the designated protest site. The Olympic Arrangement legislation allowed police to use extensive special powers and turn most of the site into an "exclusion zone". The NSW Police Minister, Michael Costa revealed that \$5 million had been spent policing the event.

The talks came at a crucial time with the Federal Government due to enter into negotiations over

a 'free trade' agreement with the USA in three months' time. The SAFTA (Singapore Australia Free Trade Agreement) was signed just weeks ago, which copies Chapter 11 from NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) giving Australian corporations rights to sue the Singaporean government against laws that stop them from making money, and vice versa.

Before the protests, Costa had made public attempts to try to ban three websites he said were promoting violence against the WTO. Senator Alston labelled the sites, "insidious, anti-democratic and interested in causing violence, mayhem and anarchy." The sites were eventually cleared by the ABA, which said they were not in breach of government regulations, but as the Melbourne Indymedia collective noted, "Costa's politricks are far less about these specific posts and much more about discrediting and isolating the WTO protests."

Costa went on to attempt to justify heavy police tactics the day before the protests by absurdly insinuating in parliament that the self-described 'pashtivists' from the Spin The Bottle Bloc were planning violence. Actually they were plan-

ning to kiss each other. NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Dick Adams said there would be a strong police presence, featuring members of the dog and bomb squad, insisting that "one would be foolish not to take into account what happened in Bali and the current international climate."

Street marches were denied permits throughout downtown Sydney for five days from November 13 to 17.

Of course, people went ahead and protested anyway, ignoring the lack of permits. On Thursday protesters took to a mobile reclaim the streets, snaking through Sydney's central business district. There were 14 arrests including five people arrested while dancing around a fountain. Three naked protestors were arrested for offensive behaviour. They had been

NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Dick Adams said there would be a strong police presence, featuring members of the dog and bomb squad, insisting that "one would be foolish not to take into account what happened in Bali and the current international climate."

drawing attention to the price women pay in war. Most unfortunately, a journalist from The Australian suffered serious abdominal injuries when a police horse trampled on her.

The protesters who made the journey to Homebush on the Friday generally considered the numbers to be disappointing, due at least in part to the difficulty in accessing the Homebush location, while there were also reports of disinformation keeping protesters

away.

The designated protest site was unequipped with toilets or drinking water but, incredibly, loudspeakers on light poles played gentle classical music. There were several attempts to pull the fence down with brief success leading to a few arrests and scuffles with police. A Peace Bloc sat silently on the road meditating. The Radical Cheerleaders from Melbourne and Lismore swung some sassy and morale-boosting chants. Police snatch squads grabbed banners, sound-systems and arrested prominent protesters, seemingly (although not necessarily) targeting arbitrarily, and at one point making an effort to grab a soccer ball.

A press conference earlier in the day had brought condemnation from international Non

should be conditional upon minimum environmental and human rights standards. Markets are there to serve rather than rule humanity."

Trade Minister Mark Vale announced a WTO pledge to facilitate access to cheap medicines to poor countries. After much public pressure in Qatar one year ago, the WTO panel recognised the right of WTO members to override patents on expensive Western drugs and make the products themselves when public health appears to be at stake. The WTO laws prohibit exportation of these drugs. The recent pledges refer to countries that do not have the ability to manufacture drugs and therefore depend on expensive imports. However Oxfam International and Medecins Sans Frontieres immediately condemned the proposals, suggesting that if accepted by the full WTO they would increase dependence of the poor nations on the rich.

The announcement afforded the WTO favourable media attention, casting them in the role of benevolent organisation, with the protesters seen to be violently misguided.

In response to the mainstream media's heavily skewed reporting, the so-called Institute For Applied Piracy disrupted usual radio programming by blocking commercial signals for 10 minutes with an anti-WTO report, broadcasting their version of the truth about what the WTO means for the people of Australia.

*Adam is a member of the Melbourne Indymedia Collective.*

## Terrorist to investigate terrorism

LIAM CRANLEY

The Bush administration's choice of investigator into the hundreds of questions raised about 9/11 has himself been questioned. Currently French, Chilean and Argentinean judges are pursuing Mr Henry Kissinger for a word about his involvement in right-wing coups, death and the ruthless use of military force.

Perhaps Mr Bush wanted an expert on the job. But as Kissinger is now a highly paid advisor to many of the ruling families and corporate fiefdoms implicated in 9/11, there have been suggestions of a conflict of interest.

The US government's decision to acquiesce after 14 months and have any investigation at all surprised some, but disappointed the bereaved families of those who died in the attacks on September 11, 2001. They had demanded an independent expert commission, and instead have got a panel headed by a old Pentagon figure, made up of politicians from the two major parties and controlled by the President.



The US Greens party have called for Kissinger to be replaced, citing his admitted activities as National Security Advisor to President Nixon, and Secretary of State to President Ford. In that time Kissinger helped plan the coup in Chile (September 11, 1973), successfully pushed for the bombing of

Cambodia and Laos (approximately 950,000 noncombatants dead), and gave Indonesian dictator Suharto the training, the weapons and the green light to invade East Timor (200,000+ dead).

Currently Kissinger is fighting a US\$3 million civil suit in Washington by relatives of General René Schneider, commander of the Chilean Armed Forces when he was assassinated in Oct. 1970. General Schneider was known as an officer committed to upholding the Chilean constitution and therefore opposed to the incipient coup against newly elected Socialist President Salvador Allende.

Mr Kissinger has acknowledged that he did organise the coup in Chile, and declassified White House records show that the CIA provided money and training to the military officers who killed General Schneider. The families of Chileans assassinated in America and Europe by dictator General Pinochet's spies and cooperative US agencies in the 1970's are also pursuing Kissinger in several national courts.

In 1975 President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger met with Indonesia's dictator President Suharto. Kissinger told reporters the US would not recognise the tiny country of East Timor, which had

recently won independence from the Portuguese, and within hours Suharto launched an invasion, killing, by some estimates, 200,000 civilians.

The calls for an investigation come from many quarters, with at least hundreds of investigators in numerous fields asking:

- why did higher levels of the FBI and CIA smother early intelligence warnings and investigations of suicidal fundamentalist hijackers?
- why didn't US Air Force jets intercept the second and third planes on September 11 when they had 43 minutes to do so?
- early reports of massive insider trading profits have vanished into silence, how can law enforcement ignore such a direct lead to backers of terrorism?
- is it relevant that George W. Bush was presented with a plan for a war in Afghanistan two days before the attacks on New York and Washington?

It is unlikely that the commission headed by Kissinger will look at coincidences after the fact, such as the only persisting commitment of the US or its allies to Afghanistan being an oil pipeline (full steam ahead) and a tidy set of military bases (four new ones in the region, conveniently located for oil and gas reserves). The military, FBI and CIA officers who have gone public

over their superiors obstruction of pre- and post-911 investigations, such as FBI agent Robert White or Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Butler, are also uncertain of getting a hearing.

In March and April 2002, Democrat Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney became the first American politician on the federal level to ask some of these questions publicly, and for her trouble was dumped by the Democrat party, losing her seat.

Mr Kissinger's current work centres on Kissinger Associates, a corporate consulting firm whose clients include Saudi royal families, oil corporations and weapons manufacturers. As these are some of the main suspects in aiding or abetting terrorism, its unknown if Kissinger will continue assisting those interests. Bush meanwhile has just secured the spending of an additional US\$35 billion on intelligence and internal security next year, in addition to military spending.

[www.unansweredquestions.org](http://www.unansweredquestions.org)  
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# Iraq's nuclear non-capability

IMAD KHADDURI

As the war storm against Iraq swirls and gathers momentum, seeded by the efforts of the American and British governments, serious doubts arise as to the credibility of their intelligence sources, particularly the issue of Iraq's nuclear capability. It has been often noted that reliable intelligence on this matter is not immediately forthcoming. Moreover, such intelligence as has been presented is spurious and often contradictory. Perhaps it is not too late to rectify this mis-information campaign.

I worked with the Iraqi nuclear program from 1968 until my departure from Iraq in late 1998. Having been closely involved in most of the major nuclear activities of that program, from the Russian research reactor in the late sixties to the French research reactors in the late seventies, the Russian nuclear power program in the early eighties, the nuclear weapons program during the eighties and finally the confrontations with UN inspection teams in the nineties, I find present allegations about Iraq's nuclear capability, as continuously advanced by the Americans and the British, to be ridiculous.

Let us go back to 1991. A week before the cessation of two-month saturation bombings on the target-rich Iraq, the Americans realised that a certain complex of buildings in Tarmiah, that had just been carpet bombed for lack of any other remaining prominent targets, exhibited unusual swarming activity by rescuers the next morning. When they compared the photographs of that complex with other standing structures in Iraq, they were surprised to find an exact replica of that complex in the north of Iraq, near Sharqat, which was nearing completion. They directed their bombers to demolish the northern complex a few days before the end of hostilities. My family, along with the families of most prominent Iraqi nuclear scientists and the top management of the northern building, were residing in the housing complex. The Tarmiah and Sharqat buildings were designed for housing the Calutron separators, similar to those used by the American Manhattan Project to develop the first atomic bombs that were dropped by the Americans on Japan.

At the end of 1991, after that infamous UN inspector, David Kay, got hold of many of the nuclear weapons program's reports (reports whose maintenance and security I had been in charge of), the Americans realised that their saturation bombing had missed a most important complex of buildings: that complex at Al-Atheer, which was the centre for the design and assembly of the nuclear bomb. A lone, single bomb, thermally guided, had hit the electric substation outside the perimeter of the complex, causing little damage.

The glaring and revealing detail about these two events is the utter lack of any intelligence about these buildings- information that should have caused the repository of American and British intelligence to overflow. That is to say American and British intelligence had no idea of the programs that those buildings harbored - programs that had been ongoing at full steam for the previous ten years!

What really happened to Iraq's nuclear weapon program after the 1991 war?

Immediately after the cessation of

hostilities, the entire organisation that was responsible for the nuclear weapons project turned its attention to the reconstruction of the heavily damaged oil refineries, electric power stations, and telephone exchange buildings. The combined expertise of the several thousand scientific, engineering, and technical cadres manifested itself in the restoration of the oil, electric and communication infrastructure in a matter of months - an impressive accomplishment, by any measure.

At one heated encounter, an American inspector remarked that the nuclear scientists and engineers were still around, and hinted accusingly that those scientists and engineers may be readily used for a rejuvenated nuclear program. The retort was, "What do you want us to do to satisfy you? Ask them to commit suicide?"

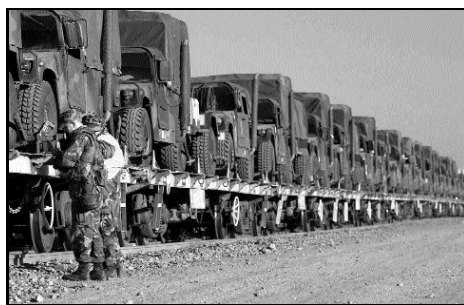
Then the UN inspectors were ushered in. The senior scientists and engineers among the nuclear cadre were instructed many times on how to co-operate with the inspectors. We were also asked to hand in to our own officials any reports or incriminating evidence, with heavy penalties (up to the death penalty, in some cases) for failing to do so. In the first few months, the 'clean sheets' were hung up for all to see. As the scientific questioning mounted, our scientists began to redirect the questioners to the actual technical documents themselves that had been amassed during the ten years of activity. These documents had been traveling up and down and throughout Iraq in a welded train car. Then the order was issued to return the project's documents to their original location. At that point, David Kay pounced on them in the early morning hours of September 1991. Among the documents were those of Al-Atheer and the bomb specifics.

In the following few years, the nuclear weapons project organisation was slowly disbanded. By 1994, its various departments were either elevated to independent civilian industrial enterprises, or absorbed within the Military Industrial Authority under Hussain Kamil, who later

escaped to Jordan in 1996 and then returned to Baghdad where he was murdered.

Meanwhile, the brinkmanship with the UN inspectors continued. At one heated encounter, an American inspector remarked that the nuclear scientists and engineers were still around, and hinted accusingly that those scientists and engineers may be readily used for a rejuvenated nuclear program. The retort was, "What do you want us to do to satisfy you? Ask them to commit suicide?"

In 1994, a report surfaced claiming that Iraq was still manufacturing a nuclear bomb and had been working on it since 1991. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors brought the report to Baghdad, demanding a full explanation. The inspectors requested my opinion on the authenticity of the report, inasmuch as I was the responsible agent for the proper issuance and archiving of



all scientific and engineering documents for the nuclear weapons project during the eighties. It was my opinion that the report was well done, and most probably had been written by someone who had detailed knowledge of the established documentation procedures. However, as we pointed out to the IAEA inspectors, certain words used in the report would not normally be used by us but rather by Iranians and we supplied an Arabic-Iranian dictionary to verify our findings. The IAEA inspectors never referred back to that report.

During these years, crushing economic inflation was growing. It would spell the end for most of the Iraqi nuclear scientists' and engineers' careers in the following years.

In 1996, Hussain Kamil, who was in charge of the entire range of chemical, biological and nuclear programs, announced from his self-imposed exile in Amman that there were hidden caches of important documentation on his farm in Iraq. (Apparently, he had had his security entourage stealthily salvage what they

thought were the most important pieces of information and documentation in these programs.) The UN inspectors pounced on this and a renewed string of confrontations occurred, until the inspectors were asked to leave Iraq in 1998.

In the last few years of the nineties, we did our utmost to produce a satisfying report to the IAEA inspectors concerning the entire gamut of Iraq's nuclear activities. The IAEA finally issued its report in October 1997, mapping these activities in great detail. The inspectors raised vague, 'politically correct' queries which seemed obligatory in their intent.

In the meantime, the economic standing of the Iraqi nuclear scientists and engineers (along with the rest of the civil servants and the professional middle class) has been reduced to poverty level. Even with occasional salary inducements and some insubstantial benefits, many of those highly-educated persons have been forced to sell their possessions just to keep their families alive. Relatively few have managed to leave Iraq. The majority are too gripped by poverty, family needs, and fear of the brutal retaliation of the security apparatus to even consider a plan of escape. Their former determination and drive, profoundly evident in the eighties, has been crushed by harsh economic realities; their knowledge and experience grow rusty with the passage of time; their skills atrophy from lack of activity in their fields.

Since my departure from Iraq in late 1998, one cannot help but notice the mien of those former nuclear scientists and engineers as being but a wispy phantom of a once elite cadre representing the zenith of scientific and technical thought in Iraq. Pathetic shadows of their former selves, the overwhelming fear that haunts them is the fear of retirement, with a whopping pension that equates to about \$2 a month.

Yet, the American and British intelligence community, obviously influenced by the war agenda, vainly attempts to continue to provide disinformation. For example, a consignment of aluminum pipes (the intelligence experts opine) might conceivably be used in the construction of highly advanced, 'kilometres long' centrifugal spinners. The consideration that there are no remaining Iraqi personnel qualified to implement and maintain these supposed spinners seems to have eluded the intelligence agencies' reports.

Bush and Blair are leading their public by the nose, attempting to cloak shoddy and erroneous intelligence data with hollow patriotic urgings and cajolery. But the two parading emperors have no clothes.

*Imad Khadduri has a MSc in Physics from the University of Michigan (US) and a PhD in Nuclear Reactor Technology from the University of Birmingham (UK). Khadduri worked with the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission from 1968 until 1998. He was able to leave Iraq in late 1998 with his family.*

[www.YellowTimes.org](http://www.YellowTimes.org)



# Aboriginal tent embassy – 214 years sovereignty never ceded

BELLE BUDDEN

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy (ATE), situated on the Lawns of Old Parliament House, is the oldest running protest site in Australia and one of the oldest in the world. The first act of dissent on this site was in 1927 when two male elders from that area made protests against the construction of Parliament House. The most well known of these men was Billy Clements. In 1972 the Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established and spearheaded the Land Rights movement.

Situated on the traditional homelands of the Ngunnawal people of the Wiradjuri Nation, Uncle Neville Williams of the Ngunnawal people stated: "these are the lands of my people, it was traditionally used as a meeting place for our people and that is why it is now the ideal platform for our people to take the many different problems we face in our communities directly to the governments perpetuating these problems".

In 1993, the fire for peace and justice was lit as a memorial for Aboriginal freedom fighter Kevin Gilbert, and a portion of his ashes were placed in the fire. The sacred fire has burnt continuously out of respect and for all the Aboriginal activists who have continued in the struggle for land rights and sovereignty.

Placed on the Australian Heritage Commission in 1995, the embassy is recognised as a site of special cultural significance and it is on the register of the National Estate. In 2000, Auntie Isabell Coe, who has continued involvement with the embassy since 1972, took the fire for peace and justice to Victoria Park in Sydney as a constant protest action throughout the Olympic Games. Simultaneously Uncle Kevin Buzzacott led a sacred walk from Lake Eyre to Victoria Park, joining with the camp in Sydney. In 2001 Auntie Isabell Coe took ashes

from the sacred fire and established an Aboriginal Embassy in The Hague and Ireland, for the recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty. This fire is a site of deep spiritual significance to Aboriginal people and supporters of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, symbolising the determination by indigenous people for sovereignty. Throughout October 2002, there were repeated attempts to put out the sacred fire by Aboriginal persons. Division in the Aboriginal community has been fostered and utilised by the Australian government, as continuing genocidal practices of division. As a platform for grassroots community ATE is symbolises a threat to government legislation.

The Liberal Party's National Council held lengthy discussions regarding the ATE in April of this year. Canberra's branch leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Gary Humphries, led an attack condemning the embassy as an eyesore and source of constant trouble, proposing a resolution to condemn the ATE. It was passed unanimously. The Liberal Council concluded that due to the advancements made by Aboriginal people under Native Title, the ATE was no longer relevant. Mr Kim Keogh proposed a resolution that would have the embassy forcibly removed, but Mr Humphries concluded that the forced removal of



the embassy was an issue for the Aboriginal leadership (Canberra Times 15&16-04-2002).

Throughout recent decades in Australia's history there has been a continued trend for the government to co-opt radical movements. Forming government departments, reference groups and advisory bodies, funding has been

Throughout October 2002, there were repeated attempts to put out the sacred fire by Aboriginal persons. Division in the Aboriginal community has been fostered and utilised by the Australian government, as continuing genocidal practices of division.

thrown towards them, removing the politics from the discourse surrounding the issues. This can be argued of the women's movement in the 1970's, the environment movement and the Land Rights movement into Native Title served by the Land's Councils. The Native Title Act has done little to advance the conditions faced by the large

majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain the most incarcerated and unemployed people in Australia. They represent the highest proportion of suicide rates, appalling health and living standards, the highest infant mortality rates, and the lowest life expectancy of any other group in the nation. Representing these aspects of Aboriginal Communities and this is why the government is quick to dismiss the ATE as an eyesore.

Native Title is not the same as Land Rights. The Native Title Act causes huge problems within indigenous communities as families are expected to prove their authenticity and continuing connection to their homelands when in many cases people were forcibly removed by the Australian govern-

rights of custodianship over their homelands. Rights vary from region to region, depending on the availability of natural resources in which case most rights afforded under Native Title have been vetoed under the Wik decision.

In January 2002, elders at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy declared original and continuing sovereignty over the lands and waters known as Australia, and state that Aboriginal sovereignty has never been ceded. It was merely impeded by the use of extreme violence by the first fleet of boat people in 1788 and those who followed.

Only when genocide is formally recognised can reconciliation occur, and only when the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised as the sovereign nations of these lands and waters known as

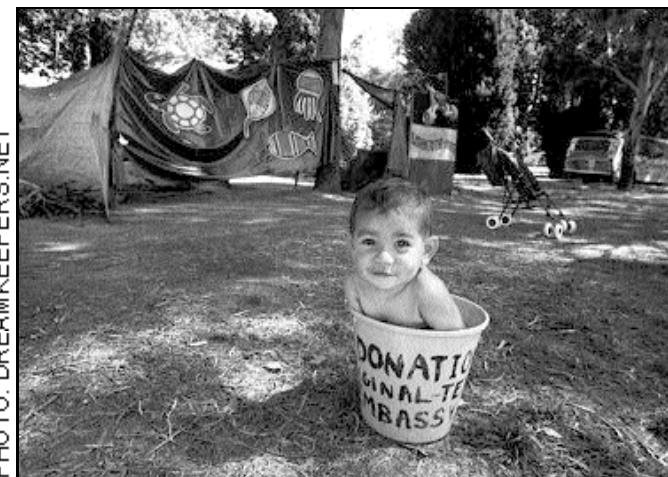


PHOTO: DREAMKEEPERS.NET

ment. The legal ramifications have proved exhausting and stressful, causing many complications and underhanded situations in communities that have rarely seen any form of justice even for successful applicants. The Native Title Act has been designed to give very little of what Australia's first people are rightly entitled too: access and

Australia can a spiritually, legally and culturally meaningful treaty take place. The fire has never been extinguished.

## Monsanto, the World Bank and our water

LOUISE MORRIS

Australia sinks further and further into drought while much of Europe is washed away in torrential downpours as part of what is commonly described as the phenomena of global warming or climate change. The obvious changes in distribution of the world's water and more to the point the quality of that water has not gone unnoticed by those in the 'top end of town'.

In May of 2000 *Fortune Magazine*, widely regarded as a reliable indicator of future financial trends, predicted that "Water promises to be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th: the precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations".

This far reaching statement was supported by the earnings for trans-national corporations (TNC) dealing in water at some 400 billion dollars for 2000, which to put in per-

spective was 40% of the oil industries revenue and one third larger than that of the pharmaceutical industry. These earnings are from a minute sector of the world's population which buys water from TNC's, comprising just five percent of the global population. The potential growth of this industry in a world where drinkable water is getting harder to find is obvious, so much that the World Bank estimated the

future of water as a bankable commodity to be around 1 trillion dollars.

Such a huge money making possibility has stimulated the world of trans-national corporations into lobbying the World Bank to list water under the General Trade in Service (GATS) agreement, making it available for free trade along with other such commodities. Placing the buying and selling of water, the essential for life on earth, under the controls of the private sector.

Among the trans-nationals who are wading into the burgeoning water marking is Monsanto, who of course have made their name as a giant in the chemical manufacturing world. Monsanto is looking to get a foot hold in the world of water by starting its operations in Mexico and India, both of whom have been

long-plagued by water shortages. It would seem that Monsanto is hoping to emulate the likes of Enron, Vivendi and Suez-Lyonnaise which are listed in the Fortune 500.

Among the trans-nationals who are wading into the burgeoning water marking is Monsanto, who of course have made their name as a giant in the chemical manufacturing world.

Vivendi being the market leader with annual earnings of 13 billion, from an estimated 110 million global consumers.

It is not hard to see how this market will continue to grow with the likes of the City of Singapore having to import its population's drinking water, while water catchments in arid countries such as Australia are relentlessly logged and the effects of herbicide and pesticide runoff continue to accumulate in what drinking water stores we do have. The demand for drinkable water which is no longer available locally is set to increase dramatically and if current trends are anything to go by Australia will be leading consumers of this trans-national marketing dream.

## World Briefs

### Twin flags to be a symbol of goodwill in Papua

Pro-independence Papuans plan to celebrate the 41st anniversary of Papua independence on December 1st, at the home of murdered leader Theys Eluway. The Jakarta Post reports the Morning Star Papuan flag and the Indonesian flag will be raised simultaneously in a symbol of goodwill. Nine Indonesian Kopassus special forces members - including two middle-ranking officers - have been charged over Theys Eluway's murder one year ago. His body was found in a mini van at a village, after he had attended a National Heroes Day celebration at the Kopassus compound in Jayapura. Papuans have been struggling for independence since 1969 when the Dutch colony was handed over to the Indonesian government. The current Indonesian Government has recently granted the province more autonomy, and its name has been changed back to Papua from Irian Jaya.

ABC Radio Australia News

### Zimbabwe: police pick up anti-rape protestors

Dozens of anti-rape protestors have been locked up by police in Harare and are due to appear in court. The protestors, who included school children, had gathered at a school in Marimba Park, where the 63-year-old male deputy head teacher, Gibson Kwaramba is alleged to have raped a 13-year-old girl. The teacher was released on a five thousand dollar (US\$90) bail and went back to work as usual and is due to appear in court on December 5. The Ministry of Education is on record as saying it was not aware of the case. "It is unjust and outrageous that a rapist is not locked up, is granted bail yet those who protest against the social evil are imprisoned overnight," the spokesperson said. "This sends out a very bad message to our society that rape is acceptable".

[www.pambazuka.org](http://www.pambazuka.org)

### Soybeans ordered destroyed after 'Pharmacrops' get loose

US officials have ordered 500,000 bushels of soybeans destroyed after the crop was contaminated by maize genetically engineered to produce an experimental drug. Hundreds of acres of fields have been planted with GE crops designed to produce various experimental medicines and vaccines that are part of the much-touted 'biopharma' industry. Soybeans were planted on a Nebraska state field where an experimental biopharma maize was grown the year before. The maize had gone to seed and inspectors from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) found maize growing among the soybeans early last month. ProdiGene, a Texas biotech company, was told to remove the plants but when inspectors returned a month later, they found that the maize was still there and the field had been harvested. Fortunately all of the soy went to a single storage facility in Nebraska and officials were able to prevent it from entering the human or animal food chains.

[ipsnews@ips.org](mailto:ipsnews@ips.org)

continued page 8

# From WEF to WTO

## where to next for protesting corporate globalisation?

MIKE LUDDITE

If Melbourne's S11 protest in 2000 had an air of Star War to it - an unexpected victory by the Rebel Alliance - the Empire Struck Back at the recent WTO protests in Sydney.

On November 14th and 15th the WTO conducted a mini-summit of 25 trade ministers in the Novotel Hotel at Olympic Park in Homebush, Sydney. As we saw at the World Economic Forum meeting in Melbourne two years ago, crowds gathered in response, but they weren't there to lay down the welcome mat.

It was no great surprise that the "No-WTO" protests were considerably smaller than those of S11, even if public appreciation of the anti-corporate globalist's position has grown. There are a number of plausible reasons for this: the WTO meeting was smaller, and coming two years later, the WTO has become far more attentive to the need to 'spin doctor' its proceedings; the so-called war on terror has made voicing dissent a more marginal affair; and Sydney seemingly has a weaker activist movement than Melbourne. Given the media coverage of the event, one might easily reach the conclusion that the WTO is a benevolent society whose sole aim is to provide cheaper healthcare to the third world.

It is also possible that many erstwhile protestors now prefer to act in a less confrontational manner; and it was rewarding speaking to protesters who had spent their week in Sydney not just preparing for the protest, but also talking to media and other groups in an effort to explain why they opposed the WTO.

The protests were quite distinct between each day: on Thursday, the protests took place throughout Sydney's CBD, with about 5000 demonstrators taking part in a combination of marches, speeches, street theatre and dancing. The only serious injuries were received by Patricia Karvelas, a journalist for The Australian, who was trampled by police horses; unsurprisingly, politicians later attempted to claim protesters were responsible. The day ended with a fairly mellow party in Hyde Park, which was only marred by the police conducting several unnecessary arrests, including one local indigenous man taken away for swearing.

On Friday, the protest moved to Homebush itself. Unlike at S11, the ostensible aim was not to blockade the

venue, but to gain access to it. With about one thousand mostly peaceful protesters against a large and heavily armed police presence, backed up by horses, dogs, motorbikes, numerous divvy-

Unlike at S11, the ostensible aim was not to blockade the venue, but to gain access to it. With about one thousand mostly peaceful protesters against a large and heavily armed police presence, backed up by horses, dogs, motorbikes, numerous divvy-vans, three helicopters, and three kilometres of perimeter fencing, it was as unlikely a task as gate crashing Genghis Khan's birthday party.



PHOTO: SYDNEY INDYMEDIA

vans, three helicopters, and three kilometres of perimeter fencing, it was as unlikely a task as gate crashing Genghis Khan's birthday party.

The police attitude was less than zero-tolerance. They went out of their way to conduct a number of unnecessary arrests, presumably in an effort to intimidate the protesters and justify their enormous presence. Take, for example, this snippet of live reporting from Homebush by the ABC's *The World Today*:

DAVID WEBER: The scene is colourful but static; I'd have to say that it's a scene

of chaos at the moment... what's happened just recently is police have set up a perimeter outside of the fence and they've got a van where they've been picking people off, called snatch squads and taking them to the vans and generally the protestors are trying to do everything they can to stop people being taken away. [www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/s727804.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/s727804.htm)

Very little was being done

arrestee was responsible for the \$5 million of public money somehow squandered in policing the venture.

Somewhat pathetically, the NSW government is now attempting to recoup some of the \$5 million from the Federal Government whilst the WTO is laughing all the way to the bank. We can only presume that if the WTO were footing the bill, an itemised bill of costs would have been demanded.

Compared with S11, the protesters lacked solidarity and appeared directionless. The low turnout, aggressive police attitude and the futility of attempting to get past the police lines did little for the crowd's morale; but it was quite disturbing the speed with which the crowd would flee whenever the police charged. It was also disturbing that all police were carrying sidearms. Many of the police appeared to be young and uncertain and the decision to issue arms under these circumstances was unnecessary and dangerous.

Much of the creative energy, which is so important to a successful protest, had been expended the previous day or at the recent Pine Gap protests and police gained sufficient control over the venue and prevented the music truck and the 'Spin-the-Bottle' Bloc from operating. Instead, we were 'treated' to some fairly creepy music over the PA system, further reinforcing the impression that fascism is alive and well, placed just out of sight of the mainstream.

Not that everything that took place was bad. Early in the day a section of the fence was briefly pulled down and a soccer match got going until the ball was taken and some players got arrested. The most creative piece of activism for the day came from the Institute For Applied Piracy, who jammed the 2DayFM radio station with their own anti-WTO message.

[see [http://sydney.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=22860&group=webcast](http://sydney.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=22860&group=webcast)]

Given the apparent futility of attempting to breach the WTO compound, and the inevitable Murdoch-press hysteria directed against the protest, it may be debated whether actions of this nature are worth pursuing.

# Terrorism's threat to globalisation

ERICH MARQUARDT AND MATTHEW RIEMER

Following the attacks of September 11, the United States recognised the threat terrorism posed to the global economy. The architects of the attacks caused immense damage to the global economic structure. By striking at the economic and military core of this system, the inevitable spread of free trade capitalism throughout the world was temporarily postponed.

Since September 11, the United States has been pursuing a policy of coercion in order to destroy any threats to the current global economic order. The attacks of that day have been used as a justification to eliminate globalisation opposition groups; this justification has also been used to mask increased US expansion in parts of the world that were previously beyond Washington's sphere of influence.

Such newly acquired regional control can be seen in the Caucasus and Central Asia. This has given the United States greater influence in the Middle East by encroaching upon Iran's eastern and northwestern border. Military bases have been built in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The US has also been furthering economic ties with Georgia in the middle of fresh invasion threats from Moscow.

By increasing its presence, the United States has worried other regional powers, namely Russia and Iran. Moscow fears that the United States will gain more control over the oil and gas deposits in the southern Caucasus, in countries such as Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Tehran fears that increased

US involvement around Iran may limit their country's economic growth and possibly even threaten its existence. Iran recently built a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan and is currently planning a new pipeline with India; Tehran also fears that increased US influence in oil-rich Azerbaijan could limit Iran's access to oil drilling sites in the Caspian Sea. How the resources of the Caspian will be divided is still under contest with the five bordering countries - Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan - vying for rights. Further, US corporations are planning on building oil and gas pipelines out of the oil and gas rich Caucasus and Turkmenistan bypassing Iran.

Along with encroaching US troops on its eastern border with Afghanistan, many in Tehran worry about possible US troops along its western border with Iraq. Iran and Iraq have strengthened economic cooperation recently with the Iraqi-Iranian joint committee for trade and economic cooperation. Both sides stressed the development of bilateral cooperation in all fields. All of this may be squandered any day with a US invasion of Iraq. While many in Iran would not mind seeing Hussein go, the prospects

of having the US military next door is not a desirable alternative.

But Iran has remained cautiously silent over the encroaching United States. If they do not comply with US demands, Tehran fears that the US may induce "regime change" sooner than later considering that they are already part of the "axis of evil." US President Bush recently stated, "Iran must be a contributor in the war against terror. Our nation and our fight against terror will uphold the doctrine: either you're with us or against us. And any nation that thwarts our ability to rout terror where it exists will be held to account, one way or another." Such statements have put Iran on the defensive.

With the American people supporting the Bush administration against perceived and real threats, the Bush administration has unique leverage to build more military bases and thus increase US influence and intrusion around the world.

With the American people supporting the Bush administration against perceived and real threats, the Bush administration has unique leverage to build more military bases and thus increase US influence and intrusion around the world.

Washington is gambling that increased influence will decrease the chance of attacks against the

global economic system and its own territory. With US bases now littering previously hostile areas, and authoritarian central governments being propped up by funding from the US, the administration is hoping to suppress any militant sections of foreign societies.

However, such a policy is



could further inflame segments of the world already discontented with the global economic system. This could result in more attempts to attack the system. With the spread of US forces as part of this strategy, there will certainly not be a lack of targets.

Further attacks on US and Western interests will severely disrupt opportunity for global economic growth. The October bomb attack in Bali, Indonesia was a perfect example of what further attacks will do to the world economy. Indonesia's tourist industry has been damaged, which threatens the entire country's economy since tourism accounts for 3.4 percent of its GDP; it also decreases foreign investment in what looks to be an unstable market. The Bali attack has already sharply reduced the flow of tourists to points of interest throughout Southeast Asia.

Therefore, Washington believes that the best way to increase world stability and thus restart economic growth is to expand US influence across the globe. Instead of relying on foreign governments to control segments of their own populations that resist globalisation, the United States is taking matters into its own hands. As for foreign governments that directly threaten global economic growth, either by not taking action against militants or simply hampering the release of economic resources into the world market, they risk certain demise.

[www.yellowtimes.org](http://www.yellowtimes.org)

risky. The overt use of force by Washington is exposing US policy, making it harder to disguise its strategy in moral and humanist terms. Because voting blocs partly respond to moral justifications, the Bush administration could lose support at home as such justifications erode under continued scrutiny.

In addition, this administration

## Water of life

FAITH THOMAS

The World Bank predicts that by 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will run short of water. That converts to two in every three people facing water shortages. Already some 450 million people face serious water shortages due to excessive water use, pollution, and global warming. They include Peru, Spain, Iran, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, the Mediterranean, Morocco, Pakistan, parts of India, China and the Middle East, most of southern Africa, and many regions of North and South America.

In some parts of Asia and Africa, over 90 percent of the population are expected to be living with severe water stress by 2032. In Africa alone, over 300 million people already lack reasonable access to safe water. Central Florida's St. Johns River Water Management District predicts that "Central Florida will run out of drinkable water in five years," and in Australia we face the grim spectre of salinity, a direct result of our irresponsible use of water and our callous attitude toward the land.

According to Professor Frank Rijsberman, director general of the International Water Management Institute, water shortage will affect

us all. "If current trends continue, the shortage of water will extend well beyond the semi-arid and arid regions. Expanding demand for water will drain some of the world's major rivers, leaving them dry throughout most of the year," he says.

Expanding economies and populations mean that worldwide water use is expected to increase by about 40% over the next two decades. A report published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science states that "water withdrawals from rivers and underground reserves have grown by 2.5 to 3 per cent annually since 1940, significantly

ahead of population growth. Water tables are falling on every continent." The total amount of water withdrawn globally from rivers, underground aquifers and other sources has increased ninefold since 1900.

The water crisis facing the world is life threatening. Already in Australia we in the rural areas are getting a taste of what water shortage will mean as the drought drags on and animals, orchards and gardens go without. Many farmers are selling animal stocks, their source of livelihood, because there is insufficient water and feed to keep them alive.

Urban water supplies are now so heavily sanitised due to broad scale contamination and ecological imbalance, that the cocktail of chemicals we are drinking, like the chemicals we breathe and the chemicals we eat, is effecting our health.

I read a story only recently about a man who did an experiment on his small town's water supply to judge its quality. His method was to raise goldfish in the town water. After several months most of the goldfish had begun to develop growths and small tumours, while others raised in rain-

water were free of any abnormalities. This town was not industrial but rural, a small dairying community of less than 3000 people.

All over the world the story is the same. Water is being stretched thinly and the fresh water we have is being contaminated. Fully half of the world's rivers are now seriously depleted and polluted.

- Over 80% of U.S. streams and rivers are contaminated with medical drug, personal care and household cleaning products

- China's once-mighty Yellow River is on the brink of becoming little more than a dry, toxic ditch

- More than half the creeks and rivers in central California have pesticides at levels deadly to aquatic life

- Over 80% of rivers in the Yunnan district of western China are too polluted to meet drinking water standards

- In Pakistan many rivers are lined with piles of burning trash and filled with sewage and toxic wastes

- In the UK, rivers and coastal ecosystems are being smothered by toxic algal blooms

- The Colorado River Delta, once a 2 million acre habitat for 100's of bird and fish species, is now a dying mud hole

- Many rivers in eastern Kenya have become a slow moving mass of sewage, garbage, and industrial pollution.

River ecosystems, and indeed all freshwater reserves, are being threatened by dams, development, agricultural runoff, water diversions for irrigation and cities, toxic industrial pollution, sewage and other human impacts. As citizens of a desert country such as Australia we must be aware of what this means for our farming practices, our lifestyles and our water supply in years to come.

Statistics of water pollution can be found at:

<http://eces.org/ec/population/water.shtml>

<http://eces.org/ec/ecosystems/desertification.shtml>

## World Briefs

continued from page 6

### ENVIRONMENT: Oceans deteriorate as Law of the Sea turns 20

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 25 - Despite 20 years of protection by an international treaty, the world's oceans are in deeper trouble than ever before, says a UN report released Monday.

The vast resources of the oceans, whose economic benefits are estimated at over seven trillion dollars annually, are being threatened by pollution, overexploitation and destruction of marine environments, the world body said. "Coastal areas - the most productive marine environments - are the most affected," says the 16-page study, *Oceans: the Source of Life*.

More than one-half of the world's six billion people currently live within 100 kilometres of the coast. By 2025, about 75 percent will live in coastal areas, it adds.

The study comes a week after an oil tanker sank off the northwest coast of Spain, leaking more than 10,000 tons of oil and leading the government to ban fishing along 300 miles of the coast.

The Law of the Sea Convention, which was negotiated over a period of 24 years beginning in 1958, was opened for signature on Dec. 10, 1982. The convention, which has 157 signatories, has been ratified by 138 countries so far.

The 191-member General Assembly plans to honour the occasion of the convention's 20th anniversary with two days of meetings Dec. 9-10  
[ipsnews.ips.org](http://ipsnews.ips.org)

# From an escaped refugee

This letter was apparently written by one of the 'illegal' refugees who escaped this year, eleven of whom continue to be hidden and supported by unknown Australians.

To: GOD From: (supposed Criminal)  
777 Lane St.  
Brief Hello: twelve apostles  
I am from one of the Scapes Who Scapp From (WOMERA D.C.) PARADISE  
my Name is Lucky boy But People Call me Han Sen.  
I was born in 18 June 2002 When I went to US I was picked up from Heth  
Paradise (cheers 999).  
At the moment My life is good. Do you remember I remember my background  
I sleep with cross, Tablet, now I sleep to bed with Kiss and night.  
Now I can feel the beautiful life. In past I always think about the black clouds.  
Now I can take a job but when I was in past, my desire it was: just have ONE night  
and sleep I bad friend worse than bad enemy.  
I loved job (Fun) which 3 days in week but I love money (for) Final the 100000.  
I need Stereobacus I love Music.  
I sometimes work in a school (teacher) but I don't like it. HELP ME out: bellis  
Number one Sweet in this crazy world of life. I like crazy people (like me) NG  
I live in the One House (like the 1000) which in the house we have do it. Han Sen. Frigore.  
I like one Small night in a room of 12 it is called beautiful Day xxx  
F: Luck Boy, Sometimes Naughty  
I LOVE YOU  
Black cloud SHINE



## Letters

Send to: PO Box 1733 Collingwood, VIC 3066, or [letters@thepaper.org.au](mailto:letters@thepaper.org.au)

Drop us a line with comments or complaints, rants and ideas. Maximum length should be around 200 words.

Pine Gap  
Hi,

Rivka's article on the Pine Gap protests, said something along the lines of that the Pine Gap protests were cancelled because following directly on from the Easter woomera 2002 protests, people would be exhausted and that making the connections would be to confusing. From my recollection, the antibases networks had agreed to pass via the woomera border-camp on the Friday on the way to Pine Gap. Due to the war in Afghanistan, much antiwar organising was happening in the cities in the lead up to the anti-bases action and it was decided by these networks to direct energy there and put off the antibases action until later in the year.  
*ps. check out woomera2002*

scrapbook at [www.antimedia.net/desertstorm](http://www.antimedia.net/desertstorm)

Thanks, Vaughan

### International feedback

I encountered your publication on the Internet and read every page with great interest. It is heartening to see that examination of issues important to a whole world is being done, even as the same issues are ignored or occluded by a right-leaning press/broadcast oligarchy within the US, supporting an illegally elected President.

Each utterance from Washington seeks to generate a jingoistic, mindless support of policies that indeed appear Imperialist. This in the face of a weakening economy, increasing unemployment, and an incredible string of Corporate criminals (ENRON Energy, WorldCom

Technology, for instance) being brought in for a figurative wrist-slapping for having stolen billions.

In reading Mr. Ali's comments, and having encountered a number of individuals from countries outside this one post 9/11, I have formed a perspective that is at odds with Mr. Ali's, but not THAT far. My concern is that devastation and sundering lives is extremely polarizing. What we don't get in our news here in the US are the perspectives that people in Australia, the UK, the Mid-East, and the Pacific rim receive, or form, daily.

We are blessed here with reports of the rise of a 'threatening' Islamic fundamentalism, while we extol the virtues of a 'Christian' demagogue like Jerry Falwell. Hypocritical to say the least. Seems we should examine our internal politics before forcing them

on others outside our borders. Still, I have a feeling that there has to be some area that a certain center-seeking dialogue or inter-change could prove beneficial. I have no idea yet how to achieve this. The fact that the US consumes such a huge proportion of the world's resources is embarrassing and distressing. Programs begun here years ago to conserve and reduce impacts upon the environment are eroded and decimated. The ozone layer depletion has its roots in the consumption taken for granted in the US. The world shrivels while we grow fat and complacent. It does have the ring of an imperium.

What I would like to state is that not all Americans support the current policies of either the Democratic or the Republican parties. Many of us are utterly dismayed by the nature of our

National and Local politics. I serve my community and, by extension, a world connected, by using my knowledge to support underserved citizens and immigrants near the US - Mexico border. I hope that by example and instruction some small, positive steps will take place over time. Whether these things will happen before self-interested governments erase the steps of individuals such as Mr. Ali and even less significant persons such as I remains to be seen.

Professor John-David Hughes BA  
MS CTAI  
San Diego Community College  
San Diego California, USA



# A plea for the future

TIM WINTON

I don't know about you, but I was under the impression that the eighties were over. Remember when greed was good, when people seemed to say go for it and bugger the consequences? Remember when government was in business and business was in government? Lots of big talk, big shots, big deals. It seemed to be an era without consequences. And then it all disappeared up its own bellybutton and nobody could quite remember anything. A remarkable onset of amnesia. Well, I remember some of it.

What sticks in my mind is the palm tree and the white shoe. As a part of all that conspicuous consumption there was a sudden rash of resorts. The bigger, the bolder, the brasher, the better. They were like trophies to the entrepreneurial ego. It seemed that no state, no piece of coastline had any dignity until it had earned its own white shoe resort. Preferably with casino. Beautiful one day. Queensland the next.

Now, you've seen the proposal for the resort at Coral Bay. The plans, the promises. Don't you get just a twinge of déjà vu? Note the artist's impression of a chlorinated tropical paradise, circa 1987? Look familiar? Everyone wearing smart casual, of course. No thongs, there. No dinghy. No daggy tent or camper trailer thanks very much. Rugged wilderness is all very well here as long as it's a distant backdrop over the wine waiter's shoulder.

A resort to cater for 2500 new guests. Built around a huge marina for hundreds of new and bigger boats. But wait, there's more. A marina with an artificial coral reef in it for tourists to snorkel on. I kid you not. Come west and see our inland reef paddle pool! This is what the developer is trying to characterise as eco-tourism in a sensitive iconic wilderness environment.

Now spare a thought for the government. This is something they've inherited and they're in a bit of a fix. The reason this resort idea looks like yesterday's idea is simply that it is. It's been around that long.

The previous government learnt some hard lessons about how passionate Western Australians are about coastal development when the Leighton Shores development was rejected by a vast outpouring of public outrage. Later, our current government was elected on a surge of support for the environment. Citizens across the board made it

plain that old growth forests were our family silver. That enough was enough. The Labor party listened and saw it, too. They won because of it. A great moment for the environment and for ordinary people. Our new premier, a smart and decent man, just recently announced a historic new sustainability policy. It seems as though he and his colleagues have heard the call of the future. They promise something new, something responsible, something exciting. And then, suddenly, here they are confronted by this old clunker from the past. I mean, look at the concept: it's high impact, with big engineering, and major physical disturbance, a real old-time imposition on the landscape. You don't have to be wearing a vest woven from fibres hand gathered from free ranging beasts and dyed in your own urine to find that concept in that kind of wilderness a bit much. You don't need a Nobel Prize to see how dated it is. Even for our elected betters it's gotta feel wrong. I believe it reflects old values that we've all moved on from in our own communities and local councils - even in our governments. We're a bit smarter than that, more likely to blend with nature, rather than try to improve on it and dominate it. Tourists want unique experiences. Not the same stale, franchised package they can get in Florida or Cairns. Now, we have a government committed to innovation and sustainability and here's this old Club Med dinosaur on its doorstep. How awkward is that for them when they've spent so long living down the bad old days? To be fair, though, remember that this deal is not of their making. Yet if they don't give the resort the go ahead, the developer has said they will consider legal action against the state. They're in a pickle. Which means all of us are in a pickle.

I'm here to ask you to help. Help us give our leaders the courage to say no to this thing. If

the Gallop government gives this resort the green light then we'll believe that they've caved in to the past, that they are still captives to old thinking, old procedures and agreements. All those ancient entanglements. Against their own policy. Maybe even their own consciences. Just because they inherited a political and administrative tangle, it shouldn't inevitably follow that they bequeath an environmental disaster. This government needs the guts to resist the call of the past, and govern for the future. It needs the community to remind it of its own principles. As a citizen who cares passionately that's your job. Tell them!

Remind them that you don't ensure a sustainable future for the world's longest fringing coral reef by saying yes to five years of water adversely impacted by construction. Nor by allowing a massive increase of boat traffic in a zone where humpbacks and turtles and dugongs and manta rays congregate. You don't let someone build a resort on the nesting beach of endangered turtles. You don't risk the very wilderness people come so far to experience.

None of us made Ningaloo Reef. We inherited it. The family silver, our precious heirloom. Our

The developer says we're all being a bit emotional. Well, hell we have a right to be. It doesn't mean we're stupid or irrational ...

I take it personally because I love the place.

Only a few weeks ago I saw turtles laying and hatching on that beach.

common asset. And we have a sacred responsibility to hand it on intact. To take all precautions to ensure its security. The precautionary principle. What on earth would induce us to risk something so valuable? It's hard enough entrusting it to our public officials who are at least somehow accountable, so why the hell would we hand it over to a bunch of businessmen? (Don't worry mate. We'll see you right. Yeah, no worries.) Why would we rob our own descendants unless we were greedy or gullible? Or asleep!

The developer says we're all

being a bit emotional. Well, hell we have a right to be. It doesn't mean we're stupid or irrational. After you read the material and consult a few scientists and engineers you see the family heirlooms might start looking pretty shaky. Now that makes it personal. For the developer, it's just business. As he says, his final responsibility is to his shareholders. Well that's you and me out in the cold, isn't it?

I take it personally because I love the place. Only a few weeks ago I saw turtles laying and hatching on that beach. Swam with huge manta rays right in the path of the planned breakwater and the proposed dredging. Dived on porite corals where the water will become opaque and no coral will grow. Once you've seen a living, breathing place, a vivid ecosystem, it's hard to write it off as mere collateral damage. When you see your natural heritage as a precious heirloom it's too close to home.

There are tens of thousands of people for whom this is already way too close to home. People who are not asleep. People who are taking this threat personally. We're just ordinary citizens who



little lighter in the loafers. Something that smells like the future and not the past. Something worthy of the reef, that protects our inheritance above all other considerations.

I think the word is getting out. This campaign is expanding exponentially. There are scores of people working on this day and night for nothing. They need input, advice, moral support, resources. Please help them if you can. Call the numbers on your information sheet. Write a blizzard of letters. Be part of something you'll be proud of.

Wouldn't it be great to think at this low point in our nation's history, when people despair at the lies and evasions of public officials, that the community might coax our state government to act on principle? To look to its better nature. To hold its nerve and not just tramp down the well worn path to the land of the great cockup. Because we've been there before, we've endured yesterday's men and yesterday's ethics. View yourself as a little memory aid. Remind the government of its own promises of what it stands for, of what its moral obligations are. Give them the information, the groundswell, the confidence to knock this thing on the head once and for all and act for the common good. That is, for the real shareholders. The people. Who deserve better. Who are awake and likely to take this all very, very personally.

So spread the word. Think of our future. Save the reef.

## A little history on Ningaloo

1. The EPA actually recommended in 1995 that an even larger version of the proposal be approved. The EPA has been provided with a mountain of evidence on the likely damage the marina would cause.  
2. The large lagoon and break in the reef attract many species, including dugongs, whale sharks, dolphins and manta rays. Humpback whales favour the area as a nursery for their calves on their southerly migration.

[www.saveningaloooreef.org](http://www.saveningaloooreef.org)

## Letters continued

### Time to speak out

Dear editors,

With the first part of the draconian anti-terror legislation passed through parliament and further measures tabled for discussion it is about time the general public spoke out against this absolute disregard for civil liberties.

To argue that these measures are necessary to ensure some abstract notion of national security is nothing short of farcical. ASIO has traditionally struggled to justify its existence and its awareness of what constitutes national security and how this should be addressed is inefficient to say the least; the Hilton bombing serves as a key example of just how far the organisa-

tion is prepared to go to legitimise its existence.

How else can we explain its unjustified (not to mention expensive) monitoring of organisations who pose no threat to the status quo in Australia (Teddy Bears Picnic anyone?) and how else do we explain the constant childish rivalry with the Australian Federal Police and its relevant departments? How also do we explain ASIO's lack of credibility in detecting potential threats and then claiming victory with the use of excessively violent 'secret' raids on alleged terrorist sympathisers, requisite television and newspaper cameras in tow?

In short, inefficient or incompe-

tent application of existing legislation should not and must not be used as an excuse to introduce draconian legislation which will further erode our hard won civil liberties just so an organisation that has already proved itself incompetent in ensuring our security can increase its control over our everyday lives.

Regards

Jay Sivad, Melbourne VIC.

### It's up to the battlers in the bush

The Paper

The Estens inquiry into Telstra is an absolute joke. Any improvements that Telstra may have made

over the last few years are born entirely out of avarice on behalf of the Government, Telstra and Telstra's shareholders, and not out of the wonderful emergence of some new found corporate philanthropy. There's a huge bucket of money to had here, and they can't let a bunch of hillbilly red-necks stand in their way.

If the report was half genuine, it's recommendations would be contingent upon the improvements continuing to expand and be suitably maintained over the next 25 - 50 years or so. Then and only then, might we consider having another look at the prospect of privatising the rest of Telstra.

If the people in outback and

rural communities are stupid enough to be taken in by this report, or any of the hare-brained promises of future miracles tied directly to the sale of the rest of Telstra, then they deserve to be repeatedly shafted by the corporate high flyers and the sanctimonious blue bloods that are the Liberal party of Australia. If the rest of Telstra is sold based on the recommendations in this report, I for one will no longer give a second thought about the plight of the battlers in the bush. After all, you reap what you sow. I'm sure I won't be the only one expressing these sentiments.

Keith Warren, Kambah, ACT.



# Moving from a constructed to a dreamed world: the solar eclipse festival

MEL BURTON talks to the Exotic Native Crew about the creative dreaming buoying the Solar Eclipse Festival, held on December 7.

"Space' was dissociated from the traditionally bounded and definable notion of place."

Benjamin Gianni, *American Farm Vernacular: A prototype for Desert?*

One of the most apparent things about the desert is absence, which in turn implies the presence of time.

The desert is atopic – placeless, an immutable landscape altered by ephemeral events. The solar eclipse festival – and for the people heading out, the experience itself, is akin to the transitory nature of the solar eclipse and the desert in bloom.

massive escarpments there before, which are now just worn down hills. The hub of the festival is in lower land, with hills around, in kind of a horseshoe. There's lots of vantage points where you can just walk up and see 360 degrees, as far as you want. Killer..."

\*

"The house has become a natural being whose fate is bound to that of the mountains and of the waters that plough the land. The enormous stone plant it has become would not flourish if it did not have subterranean water at its base. And so our

concise, we've got paramedics with an ambulance, we've got St Johns, doctors scheduled on the whole time. We've got roaming first aiders, we've got a recovery area as well as a medical tent and then the whole healing space if people just want to chill out. If somebody is ill, we want them to have medical access straight away. In taking that a step further, we are trying to be a solid bridge of information re health and safety out there... We're having to plan for the possibility that there could be high winds and having all our structures tested with winds up to 140 kilometres an hour."

It's not only the landscape that defines the concept of "place", but the environment, which must also involve integrating the peoples found within. The initial point of contact was "just on a roots level," George said, "just going to the pub. Meeting the people. By going to their houses also – there's about 10 houses in Lyndhurst. [Trance is] not everybody's cup of tea, so you do have to make sure that you're sensitive to everybody else in the community. Life is diverse.

"There's about four main groups of Aboriginals in the area, three of which are Aramatta people and one of Guanamatta people. We just went out and spoke with all of them. That's a really profound experience, going on to Aboriginal property... They were all really cool about it."

This creative momentum is indelibly linked to the place itself: the Bechelard's house, the structures, the environment, and the mythology attached to that land, in conversation with the people coming. "We've been lucky, because in making the festival we've chosen who we want to come to play, so a lot of these are our favourite artists..." The healing village will include capoeira, dancing, yoga, different forms of meditation and massage. In terms of Indigenous involvement, "we're having a traditional welcome by the anumata choir." Both the Aramatta and the Guanamatta people were consulted about what was appropriate for their land. "We had to ask

these people things like, 'is it okay if people play the didgeridoo out here? Is it okay if people dress up in frill necked Lizard costume?' Because this is what people are wanting to do at the festival. Things like a), the didge is not played in this area and the frill necked lizard could be a dreaming animal to some of these people, 'cos it's from there, so we're really careful not to offend... Didge, as long as it's not played by a blackfella, and frill necked lizard, okay."

The last bastion of this process of creation, the last untapped space, is the mind. "We have moved from a constructed to a dreamed world," says Bechelard, of his house. To understand the concept of desert, it is necessary to examine the glasses through which we peer. The journey into the desert may represent an expedition into the psyche. Still the desert resonates with madness and of death. Burke and Wills failed trip into the centre. Patrick White's Voss, and his descent into hell in the quest to emulate God. And yet, that journey through madness may also culminate in inspiration, as in the parable of Jesus' 40 days and 40 nights in the desert and the American Indian Vision Quest. Looking further, there are examples of cultures all over the world for example, Shamanic trance dancing and Sufi dancers, who use drumming, meditation, and in some cases hallucinogenic substances achieve an ergotropic state – that is a heightened sense of consciousness. While the desert is loaded with mystic connotations, we create a semblance of fantasy, located in a physical space, where this point of convergence between reality and fantasy, between internal and external space is in our heads.

"Well, you can imagine, but it's always going to be more than what you imagined, a festival like this."

The solar eclipse festival – and for the people heading out, the experience itself, is akin to the transitory nature of the solar eclipse and the desert in bloom.

solar eclipse and the desert in bloom. Without a doubt, there will be a large contingent of urban sprawlers and city kids who've never experienced the desert before, and who take with them a pack full of sunscreen and preconceptions.

There are few people, and small towns in the desert. Solar eclipse day is December 7 – visible from within a 40 km shaft through the centre of Australia. The Exotic Native crew (with backbone of four) have been preparing for the party in Lyndhurst, for two years. "Have you ever been to the desert before? It's so amazing, it's so.. minimal... but so powerful," says George, about the inspiration behind the party. With over 5000 people expected, one third international, I spoke with George about creating a utopia within such an atopic scape.

"The land dictated a lot of things, because it's not just flat, it's quite undulating. It is such old land that it seems like there were

dreams attain boundless proportions."

Gaston Bechelard, *The Poetics of Space*.

Similarly, the festival must in a sense, imbibe the landscape around it, in a way that will provide a habitable 'place' in the outback. Exotic Native "[took] on the responsibility of all these people coming out to what can be quite a hostile environment, unless it's done properly ... it just has to be done properly."

"The government have been watching over our shoulder every step, the Department of Health, the police, the CFA, the SES – all these people are involved, and they're making sure everything is done to guidelines... They've been really cool. Really rigid – there's a lot of things we haven't been able to do, but in the end it's meeting up with all safety standards and all health standards the government are laying down. Our medical regime is really

## Prayer flags, horns, monks, new age wisdom

CHRIS POVEY reviews Pan Nalin's film *Samsara*.

Another Buddhist enlightenment flick. Yawn. More prayer flags, more horns, more monks, more catchy pearls of new age wisdom, yet this time a development – sex. *Samsara* opens with Tashi's (Shawn Ku) emergence from years of solitary meditation. His knuckles crack and his eyes refuse to open as monks breach his mountain tomb. His skin is blanched and he is unable to walk.

Tashi is gradually introduced to monastic life. The film's director, Pan Nalin, attempts to convey Tashi's dissatisfaction with religious life as the monk observes children in the monastery, breastfeeding women and erotic dreams. Unable to deal with his overwhelming sexual urges, Tashi leaves his religious calling in favour of village life where he marries Pema (former Miss Chinese International – Christy Chung).

And so Tashi is introduced to worldly woes. Farming. Negotiating crop sales with the Indian mob equivalent. Dealing with jealous blokes. Dealing with attraction to other women. Raising his son. The conflict and dubious morality of lay existence leads to dissatisfaction. The monk turned father is required to make a decision.

Nalin is a self-taught filmmaker from a design / visual communication background. His design expertise is evident in the film's vast landscapes. The film was largely shot

15,000 feet above sea level in Ladkha, India and the location provides the perfect canvas for Nalin's expansive ideas. These canvases are rich in detail and colour, and are beautifully framed.

The cinematic language of *Samsara* is entirely visual. The environment, as opposed to characters, conveys ideas. As Tashi leaves monastic life he rides his horse into a storm. Poised between spiritual and lay existence he stands naked in a river. Changing seasons. Flame colored leaves. Lakes, water, fire, storms. These are beautiful but clichéd images. The beauty of this film is cinematic pornography – magnificent, but vacuous.

The ideas behind the style of this film are almost non-existent. A boulder is carved with the question – 'how do you stop a drop of water from ever drying up?' We hear monks repeat fables about suffering. These are the sort of ideas or wisdoms you might read on a chip packet and make obvious, clumsy filmmaking.

Tashi's sexual awakening is a mystery. *Samsara* at its worst is simply a coming of age flick about this sexual awakening. We are unable to explain why Tashi is attracted to Pema (other than her resemblance to Angelina Jolie). He simply turns up, marries Pema and has children – certainly a plot that is 'zen' in its simplicity.

Equally, in the context of Tashi's spirituality and his fresh, secular existence; his womanising should be a complex

and interesting development. As it turns out, opportunity is the catalyst for Tashi's indiscretion. As I left the cinema I heard one woman dryly proclaim it was simply a story about a man following his cock.

This is the first feature film by Nalin, who has previously made documentaries. Of this experience he explains: 'by making documentary films, I have often keenly observed the lives of other people. Through the reality unfolding in front of the camera, I have shared the fruits of many people's destiny; their grief and joy'.

Similarly in relation to *Samsara*, the director suggests, in the realist tradition, that he desired 'to tell this story in the simplest way possible, with an approach straight from the guts. The mind should only tackle the cinematographic treatment, which, for me, is to work with the smallest number of elements possible.'

Yet reality does not unfold in front of the camera in *Samsara*. A dramatic, contrived narrative plays out before an audience left guessing as to the complexities of lay and spiritual existence. The film never engages the audience with ideas, either by its characters or appearance.

*Samsara* premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival this year and is currently on general release.

# Her Sister's Eye

**MILES ALLINSON reviews *Her Sister's Eye*, a novel tracing the mysteries of a bitter earth and people.**

Vivienne Cleven's first novel *Bitin' Back* won the David Unaipon Award in 2000, for the best manuscript by an Indigenous writer who had not published a novel. It was with some sense of anticipation then, that I chose this, her second book, *Her Sister's Eye*, to review, on a morning when things all around me seemed new and ready with mystery.

In the outback town of Mundra, Cleven has gathered the ostracised and told their story. The wandering Archie Corella who remembers nothing of his past but his name, and whose face, an unknown history has left horrifically scarred. Caroline Drysdale, the town matriarch, deemed mad, and unable to leave her own house. Murrila Salte, the Aboriginal woman who looks after her, and whose unlikely friendship is rendered with genuine warmth. And finally Sofie, Murrila's younger sister, who, as a woman with the mind of a child, is an easy victim but a surprisingly dangerous enemy.

Mundra is a town with a history of disappearances and suspicions. A place which echoes with rumours of murder and worse, and a town, like many in rural Australia, with a past scarred by the oppressions and violence inflicted upon its Indigenous inhabitants. Its very earth is sick, as if it had taken on the qualities of the events that took place upon it ('the dirt won't give to him; he can't grow roses at all, they always die'). The soil is important as Cleven's characters both unearth and bury.

One senses in Cleven the possibility of a good writer, but one who is here telling a story that she herself doesn't believe in. It is as if, being a writer, she feels obligated to write a novel, rather than being compelled by the ideas themselves. The job is to expose the mysteries of the past,

in order to render them harmless. This is important remembering, but the narrative, taking as its central motive the desire to bring past and present together, moves in an unsettling staccato between the two.

There are some rare but wonderful moments. Cleven's text works best when she's writing from the gut, with a straight-forwardness and an innocence that cuts cleanly to the essential ('Murrila watches Caroline's face closely. Cunning as a shit house rat'). The most enjoyable writing takes place around Sofie, whose rambling conversations with herself offer Cleven's writing a chance to loosen up. 'Sneak long like a cat on its gut lest ya be seened. See the Garden! Wahoo! Fucken fancy as a birthday cake'. These are the most inventive passages and the only moments of humour. For the most part, the writing is genuinely uninspired.

The mysteries are contrived and turn heavily with the too many twists of a bad thriller. They might have held some pertinence had the mood of the town been more powerfully evoked. But as it is, the town exists for two-thirds of the novel as little more than a series of strange disconnected landmarks; like props in an abandoned play that have no life of their own.

The minor characters are flat clichés, and are almost all bad. There is the wife beating Reginald, his rapist son Donald, his child-killing father Edward and the committee of white wives. And the Red Rose Lady, whose veiled spite runs the town and whose catch cries and mannerisms are so boringly obvious they might easily have been taken from some cheap Hollywood drama: 'you lying little heathen...do you know what God does to heathens? He hates them. He sends them to hell to burn'. In fact all too often the writing falls into cliché. The 'mad' ranting of Caroline Drysdale, evokes at times the disturbing atmosphere of a daytime soap opera, and the petty grievances which make up much of the action lack insight and are so melodramatic as to have one reaching out of

instinct for the remote control. The only minor characters who are 'good' are treated with an appalling lack of respect. Doris and Nana appear out of nowhere and act as little more than clumsy devices to move the plot along and reveal the truth behind mysteries set up elsewhere. Too often the characters are shocked, while the reader, feeling as if they ought to be too, isn't.

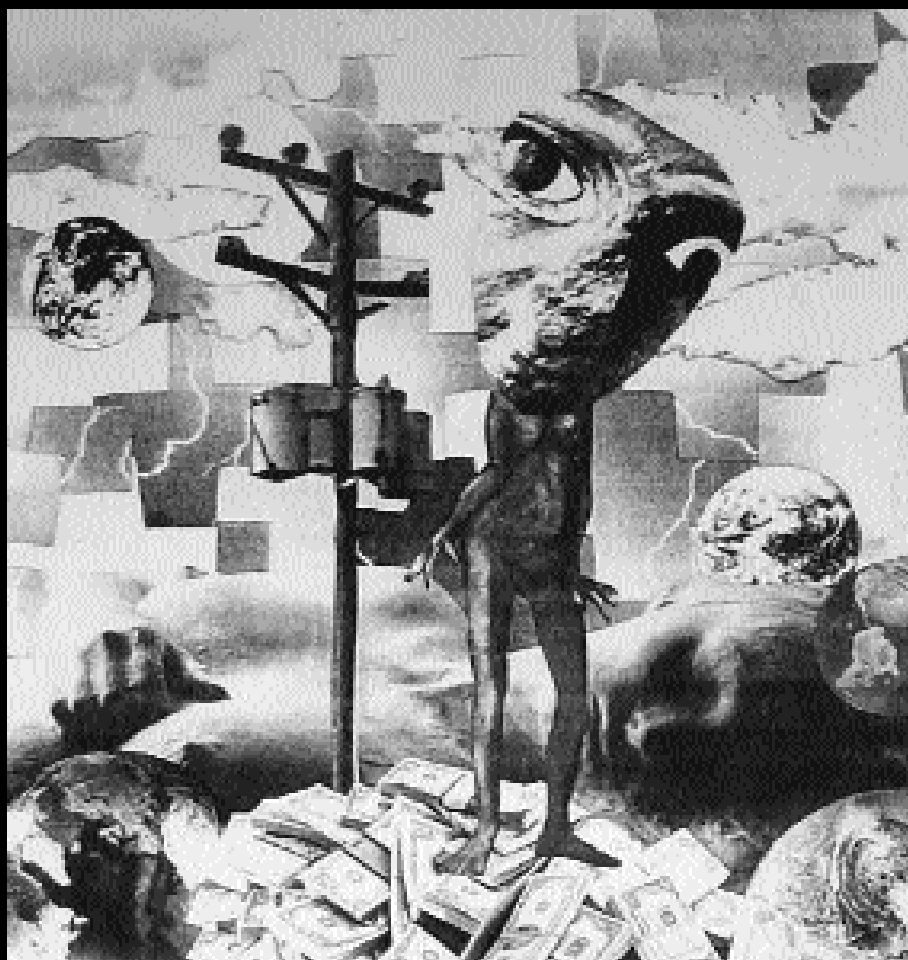
At the centre of the novel is the river, which, like the earth both gives and takes. It is an antidote for the fire and the heat that comes sweeping through in red dust storms or

The job is to expose the mysteries of the past, in order to render them harmless.

rises like dark memory in the mind of Archie, and it is Sofie's true home, where she talks to the fish. At the same time the river takes, threatens and drowns. Finishes things. It might have offered an interesting theme, but by the end of the book, where the story rises to a ridiculously overblown conclusion; its symbolic importance has been laid on so thickly, that all its mystery has vanished.

There is a humanity and accuracy to Cleven's writing when she cares. For most of this book it seems that she didn't.

*Vivienne Cleven's Her Sister's Eye has recently been published by the University of Queensland Press.*



Collages: GAGE

To see many more of these intricate and potent collages check out [www.spaz.org/gage](http://www.spaz.org/gage)

## Why are Milkbars important: a taxonomic look at Fitzroy

**CRAIG BELLAMY** discusses the ideas buoying Milkbar.com.au: Globalisation and the Everyday City, an on-line video archive of interviews with residents of the inner city Melbourne suburb, Fitzroy. The archive contains over twelve hours of video footage, which is indexed within search categories to assist in the speculative articulation of 'globalisation' at an everyday level.

The suburb of Fitzroy may not be one of the great nodes of the globalised world, but in a similar way to other inner city districts in Melbourne and elsewhere, it has revealing multifaceted engagements with the world. Fitzroy, because it is Melbourne's oldest suburb, and because it has a history as a working-class industrial suburb, has many small histories that resonate in some of the globalisation debates. These debates concern immigra-

tion, corporatisation, gentrification, the environment, national identities, global civil society, cultural appropriation, technologically augmented protest, and the broader concerns of the post-industrialisation of the major Western economies.

Although these debates are all very complex and are rooted in own particular histories, they are now regularly connected to many of the discussions on

globalisation. Immigration has become a global anxiety, corporations are understood as the great pariah in the globalisation debate, and national identities are in crisis everywhere. How does one translate these ideas within everyday frameworks, within say, a suburb like Fitzroy? People everywhere need to ground some of the complex debates of globalisation within the parameters of what we know. This is because if we cannot, then just like other coercive ideas throughout history used to explain complex things, it may become a simplistic theory of everything (somewhat like the way that 'determinism' is popularly used to chart the course of the development of computer technology, or how 'economic rationalism' is sometimes used as a theory to conceal the other more thorny human failings such as economic exploitation, and greed).

Different geographical areas connect to

textile industries have been replaced by a strip of factory outlets that sell clothes manufactured in China and Indonesia. The warehouses where confectionary and garments used to be made are now the apartments of the new middle classes. For many of Fitzroy's newest residents, Fitzroy is arguably a brand name with a purchasable lifestyle; for many of its older residents, it has developed into an expensive and less interesting place to live.

Although only a small suburb in both population and geographical size, Fitzroy is arguably one of Australia's more culturally and economically eclectic urban settings. This is partly because of a large housing estate that services the need of many lower-income, new-migrant groups, and partly because, like many other inner city areas in the Western-world, it has become a property investment and lifestyle haven.

People everywhere need to ground some of the complex debates of globalisation within the parameters of what we know.

the debates on globalisation in dissimilar ways. The new Melbourne Dockland's development for instance, a haven for what sociologists call the new-middle class, is often discussed in global terms. The word is used as cache, it rolls of the tongue like a brand name. It evokes in the individual a self-importance as though the sanitised view from the top of a fifty-storey apartment block actually gives the individual a privileged view of the ebbs and flows of humanity. There are better views.

Post-industrialism is taken as a given in many contemporary discussions on how we understand the present economic makeup of developed Western economies. Post-industrialism has emerged in the past two or three decades and is understood as the decline of labour-intensive manufacturing operations that has altered the workforce and re-shaped communities, groups, and individuals everywhere. Generally it is branded the 'information economy' or the 'new economy', and is typified by a large service sector, with the expansion of the industries that employ most citizens in knowledge production and consumption. New production efficiencies, free trade agreements, automation, and the shift of manufacturing to low-wage developing economies, has resulted in a massive decline in employment in manufacturing in Western countries. Manual Castells (The Rise of Network Society, 1996) is perhaps the leading contemporary advocate of understanding post-industrial globalisation. However, there is always Naomi Klein's acclaimed No Logo (2000).

Typical post-industrial industries include insurance, banking, education, entertainment, advertising, media, tourism, telecommunications, and of-course, information and communication technologies (ICTs). The industries that make up ICT are actually only a small part of the broader service economy, but often triumphantly wave the flag of the 'new economy'.

Fitzroy perhaps typifies a geographical locale of post-industrial Australia, partly because, quite visibly, nearly all the manufacturing industries in the district have disappeared. The local labour intensive

Fitzroy is Melbourne's oldest suburb and has roots dating back to the 19th century Victorian era. Many of the double-storey houses in the area reflect the confident facades of the Victorian middle class, whilst the uniform, utilitarian conformity of the single-storey workers' cottages reflect a much more subservient social role. Some of Fitzroy's residents still claim to remember when they could hear the whistles of factories beckoning workers to their production lines and workshops. Opposite to where I live is a grand Victorian Town Hall that stands idle, a bi-product of a state government under the spell of rationalism.

In Milkbar.com.au, when the user clicks on one of four categories of globalisation, a number of different people will appear who talk about Fitzroy. The user can view the interviews in any sequence, and from within any category. Memory is an ill-structured domain, but if we did not attempt to structure the past into some sort of narrative form, then there would be few ways to understand it. In this work, the understanding that that one gets of change within Fitzroy is, in part, dependent on how the user interacts with the work through the faces that they click on. It does not champion one voice, nor does it unduly demonstrate that knowledge about globalisation (or even knowledge about Fitzroy) is advanced simplistically. I have recorded and provided the information, then applied a structure to understand this information. The user is encouraged to view the interviews from a number of perspectives, then make their own connections between them.

*Craig Bellamy is an historian who uses computers and lives in Fitzroy. You can contact him at [milkbar@milkbar.com.au](mailto:milkbar@milkbar.com.au). The Milkbar project can be accessed and engaged with at [www.milkbar.com.au](http://www.milkbar.com.au)*



photos: Tom Civil [urban megafauna - newcastle, emotion vs reason - melbourne]



# Ten things to do in Fremantle

**SFC chronicles the only city in the West where an old goal might smell like clove smoke and odalisques.**

I left a trail of expatriate breadcrumbs across the Nullabor in 2000. When I returned to Freo recently, it was on the way to becoming a nothing town. It still had remnants of charm, but it appeared to be losing the battle against blockbuster cinemas and all you can eat tallow (gentrification is SO late nineties). There is hope for this port city though. Where Perth has tranquillised mining magnate wives with chin-chillas called Chakra and husbands called Wallet, Fremantle has Bon Scott. He's buried in the cemetery 'neath a mound of bourbon yak.

Fremantle: a potted history: Invaded by white man, 1829. Invaded by fat white man (Alan Bond), 1987.

Ten things to do in Fremantle:

**1.** Be a local. Learn to play the fiddle with a stuffed cat. Make a sign that reads: I DO NOT RECEIVE THE DOLE. MY PERFORMANCE ART IS MY LIFELINE. Receive the dole on the sly and rent a studio on Pakenham Street opposite Centrelink. Better yet, become an art teacher for the Rose 'Handtcock' set and start stockpiling Bosch pears for the Freo Renaissance. Paint the port rusting, as the last glimmer of daylight fries itself sunny side up on the dock.

**2.** Avenge. The worst thing about Freo is the McDonalds on the beach. There are drinking straws in the sand with which to suck up the shore. The next worst thing is the influx of Perth weekenders who traipse around the market being over enthusiastic about candles and dropping felafel down their hypercoloured children. Launch a guerrilla attack on the guy that sells sandgropers (sandgropers are a jar of sand and a balloon that you wiggle your finger in, RRP \$12.95). Free the exploited cephalopods from the fish and chip institutions. But make sure to keep the local economy alive by buying a tab of Bunbury acid off the twenty-eight year old kid outside Timezone.

**3.** Locate the following people: the schizophrenic astronomer, the homeless guy who reads the thesaurus, the gang from West Side story, Tim Winton, and the guy that looks like Keith Richards (and plays the cat that plays the fiddle). Freo has a population of a few hundred thou, and yet you always see the same Methadonians clunking frozen chickens into their supermarket trolleys.

**4.** Avoid university, in particular, creative writing classes.

**5.** Go to The Roundhouse. The Roundhouse is WA's oldest building. Fremantle used to be a penal settlement. The Roundhouse was used as a prison for the Noongars before they were sent to Rottnest Island. Think about the Indigenous men who drowned trying to escape during a storm. Think about how heinous WA's history is, and then go and look at the statue in the park that has two plaques. One says that the whites under Charles Fremantle invaded and slaughtered the blacks; the other says the blacks fought back. The Roundhouse is a sacred site.

**6.** Smoke a joint whilst sitting on one of the giant anchors in town as a tribute to the Dutch. Their shipwrecks are everywhere on the West Coast; the most famous one being the Batavia. Centrelink will try to make you polish the Duyfken replica for work for the dole. Just say – "I ain't Howard's freakin' cabin boy!" and go home to make a map of shipwrecks using coffee and matches.

**7.** Do a life drawing class at the Old Gaol. Brendan Abbott, recent history's version of Ned Kelly, escaped from Fremantle jail, back when it was a maximum security prison. In 1992 it closed, and now it's full of clove smoke and odalisques. For dinner, go and find the Chilean survivor women with their wisdom eyes, immaculately bent, and stuffing eggplants with cynicism. Avoid making eye contact with the local cads: men, thirty odd years old, who habitually screw the naivety out of backpackers and art school chicks and run second-hand clothing stores that sell Bonds t-shirts for forty bucks.

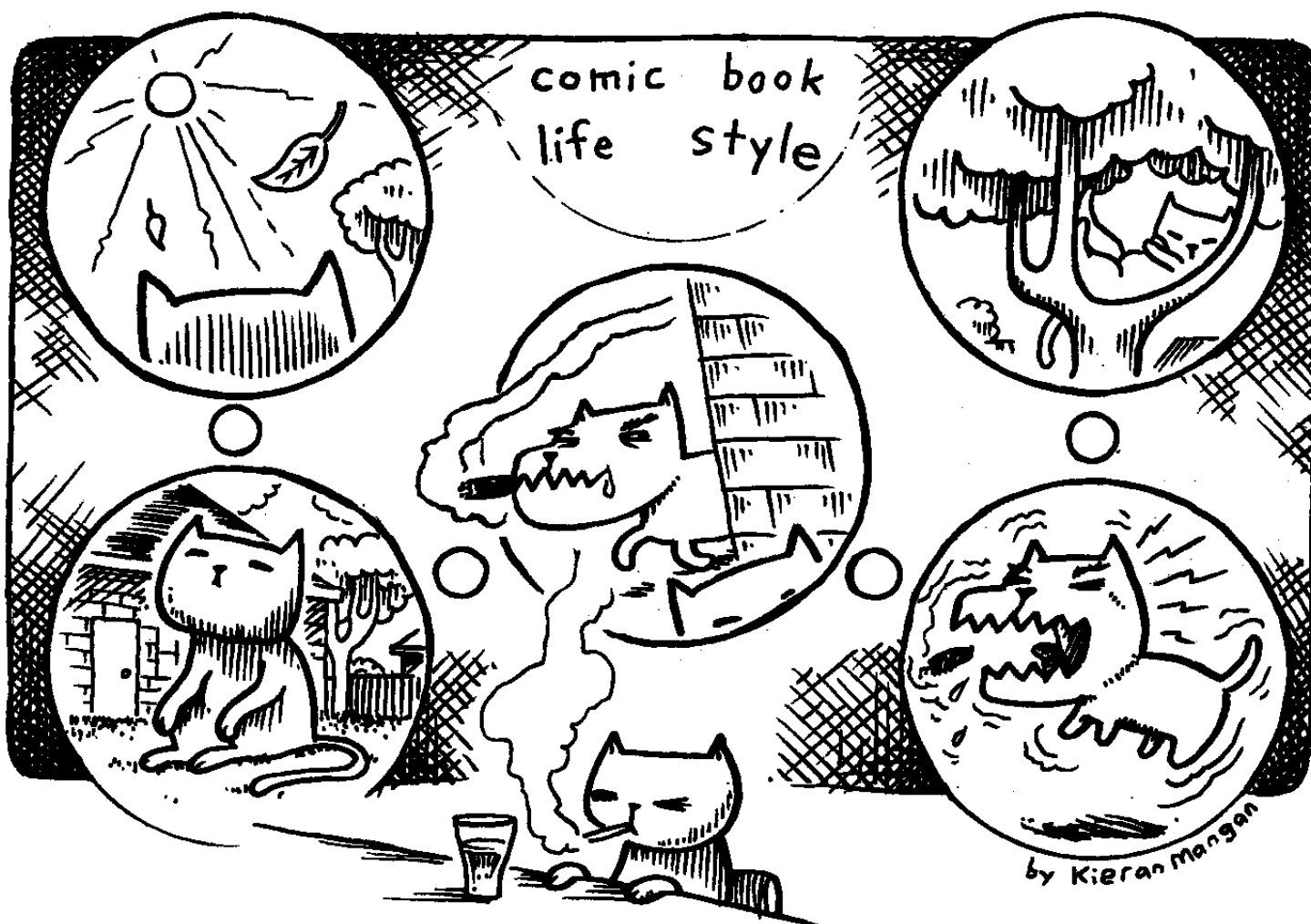
**8.** Drink a kingbrown at the foot of CY O'Connor's statue. CY was a bipolar engineer who built a pipeline that went

from Perth to Kalgoorlie. He topped himself before it started to pump. Look around the port where there was a massive wharfie dispute in the nineties. If someone walks past you and says, "sheep ships are in," be alarmed. Once a month, Fremantle smells like shit because the live sheep trade operates out of its harbour.

Centrelink will try to make you polish the Duyfken replica for work for the dole. Just say – "I ain't Howard's freakin' cabin boy!" and go home to make a map of shipwrecks using coffee and matches.

**9.** Vent. The first time I went to Freo was when I was little and it was the America's Cup. They had whitewashed the town for the occasion. So, in honour of repulsive Westie values, go and throw paint at the Dingo Flour silo. The silo has a giant red dingo on one side that is rumoured to have been painted by Alan Bond when he was a sign-writer. Head to South Beach to watch kids named after legumes slide into their parents' kneecaps. Rejoice as women with Longbeaches dangling salute the moon goddess with two buck crystals. Cycle past the MP's office, where inside they are brainstorming ways to prevent youths in their electorate from jumping into the path of oncoming adulthood.

**10.** Decide to become a writer and leave in search of a city that takes its young artists seriously. Move interstate but always have it in the back of your mind to return one day, just to see if New Editions Bookshop is still there and to lay a drone pipe atop Bon Scott's grave.



....For more comic action check out the small press outlet containing rare comic books every saturday throughout december and january [11am -3pm] at centre place, off Flinders Lane in Melbourne City as part of the latest *citylights* exhibition featuring the comic talents of *the silent army* and *the braddock coalition*. These artists have also been appearing in Art:Cult over the last couple of months and will so into the future. The beautiful full-colour lightbox treasures that *citylights* can be found in hosier lane and centre place amongst cobblestones, skip bins and all your favourite graffiti.

[www.silentarmy.com](http://www.silentarmy.com)



send articles, images, artworks and ideas to: [artcult@thepaper.org.au](mailto:artcult@thepaper.org.au)

# Thousands protest at Free Trade summit

20km south of Quito with maybe 300 indígenas, two protest caravans crossed the country spreading the word about the protest against the Free Trade Area of the Americas summit in Quito. Soon after, we got down from the buses and began a 15km trek to Quito. The number of people seemed to mysteriously increase as buses from the South caught up with us and disgorged fresh groups of protesters.

The procession was a riot of color, filled with red and blue ponchos and hundreds of rainbow flags (the symbol of the Andean indigenous and campesino movements). People lined the street to watch as it passed by. One shopkeeper explained to me that the indigenous people were like burros, dragging along the rest of the country, who were also opposed to the FTAA because it would devastate the Ecuadorian economy, but who let the indigenous movement carry the torch for their opposition.

Old women chanted ceaselessly for four hours, "No queremos, y no nos da la gana, ser una colonia, norteamericana." (We don't want, and it doesn't do us any good, to be a North American colony). One group of Bolivians, led by Evo Morales, the coca-grower who almost became president there, marched with coca leaves taped to their foreheads.

Reaching our destination in Quito we rounded the corner and found between 2,000 and 6,000 people waiting. As the two groups approached each other, people on each side were visibly stirred, and some began to run. At this point, I realised that after 4 months of frantic organising, the mobilisation was a reality. Whatever happened we had already won, that thousands of campesinos and indígenas had come to Quito to unequivocally reject US style "free" trade. And I simply began to bawl.

We continued straight toward the Marriott Hotel, where the 34 trade ministers from North and South America were arriving.

We were joined by large groups of campesinos, students, trade unionists, and international activists who had already been fighting running battles with the police, who were attempting to turn everyone back several kilometres from the Summit.

The 15,000 people march was led by a line of campesino and indigenous leaders (dirigentes), walking arm-in-arm, preceded by a Shaman conducting rites to improve the success of our efforts. Soon we were stopped by several hundred riot police. The dirigentes asked to send a delegation of civil society groups in to the summit to present a giant letter made up of the proposals and demands of thousands of people who had joined the caravans along their route. They were soundly refused.

As the social movement dirigentes ap-

proached the Avenida Amazonas, the police opened fire with a LOT of tear gas. They shot it at and over the crowd, so that as people ran away, they ran into more gas. I walked until I couldn't see or breathe, then began to run. Someone grabbed my hand and led me away. The president of the National Judicial Workers Union was hit with three tear gas cannisters and taken to the hospital. Several young kids passed out. One woman fell on her baby, who was injured and taken to the hos-

I watched some of the most oppressed people in this world confront some of the most influential. I watched a group of poor farmers, indigenous people, and workers speak, shout, sing truth to power. Although we will not know for a few days, I watched the terrain of hemispheric politics shift before my eyes. I feel so inspired, and so humbled.

pital. A reminder that free trade can only proceed via brutal repression, which is now so commonplace at trade summits that it hardly elicits comment.

It was decided to try once more to deliver the giant letter, this time at the Suissotel, where the trade ministers were meeting with assorted CEO's and trade lobbyists at the 7th Americas Business Forum.

As a strategy to boost legitimacy and head off disruptive protests, the government had already offered to allow a few civil society representatives to address the ministers. On these terms, the indigenous and campesino groups had refused. People marched up to police barricades where they asked that a much larger delegation be allowed in to deliver the letter. Clearly hoping to avoid the kind of confrontations that have occurred in past uprisings here, the government allowed 40 people to come in and meet with the ministers.

I ran to the hotel, easily passing through several police lines as I held press credentials for the summit. In the lobby I simply asked "Where are they?" and sev-



eral people pointed down. Once in the basement I followed the shouting until I reached an auditorium where 25 or so trade ministers sat uncomfortably

on stage. Peter Rossett of Food First stood up, his arm in a rainbow colored sling thanks to a protest injury. He yelled to the US Trade Representative Bob Zoellick, that he should be ashamed for pushing an agreement that would impoverish Latin Americans, not to mention many US citizens. Zoellick stared fixedly at his shoe. It was a scene that is, I think, pretty much un-

precedented in the history of trade negotiations.

The first speakers were representatives of an international meeting of parliament and congress members from across the hemisphere. They condemned the FTAA process, and called for an alternative integration, one that respects the needs and particular situations of the people of each country.

Leonidas Iza, the President of the CONAIE (the Ecuadorian indigenous federation), stated the social movements' clear rejection of the FTAA and of neo-liberalism in general. "We are in desperate shape," he told the ministers. "You couldn't possibly understand, you who were born in golden cradles and have never suffered. But we don't have food to feed our children. Our markets are flooded with cheap imports. Imported milk is dumped in Ecuador for half of what it costs to produce it, but transnationals [mostly Nestle] sell it back to us at US\$1.80 per litre. We have no way to live, and the FTAA will only make it worse. When we complain, the US government calls us terrorists. We are not threatening anything, but we are hungry and tired and things have to change." In the wake of widening protest throughout Latin America, the message was not lost on anyone.

Then a woman worker from Nicaragua spoke powerfully of the details of the FTAA, of the privatisations, poverty and social exclusion it would bring, particularly for women. "Don't think you can simply take your picture with us and push forward," she told the ministers. "We will stop the FTAA".

And, at that moment, I felt something shift. I realised that the FTAA has in 24 hours gone from something whose praises its proponents, to something they have to defend. Like the WTO before it, the FTAA has become the treaty that has to be sold to an America that doesn't want it. Or so I hope. This is how it feels here. But it may be different elsewhere.

If I am right, the hemispheric resistance to free trade and the FTAA has taken a huge step forward, even if this is but one day in a long struggle in which many more battles will be fought. Tonight's show of force may also strengthen the resolve of poor countries in the negotiations that follow here. It was a beautiful day for some of the nation's most powerful social movements. Not to mention a bad day for the US Chamber of Commerce.

## Urban briefs . . .

### Waste city

Melbourne is on water restrictions for the first time in decades. The only effect this shall have is to legally inhibit people from hosing down things which didn't need hosing down in the first place. Expanses of concrete for instance. People really do like to look after their concrete.

Walk along any popular Melbourne cafe strip on a typically less-than-tropical day and you'll find phalanxes of those ridiculously inefficient gas heaters (which increasingly green local governments still seem to have no qualms in issuing permits for) that ensure the concrete outside the cafe is as toasty as the household foot-path is hosed.

I'm desperately thinking of more ways

to please my humble patch through gratuitous resource use.

### Federation Square

Refer back to edition 39 of The Paper (October 2002) and you'll find the following prediction: 'Don't expect easily digestible quotes to accompany the Federation Square opening'. Now that most of the hoarding is off, try this one on for size (from the foyer display); 'Images, such as those seen when cutting through a rock, to form a thin slice, revealing the interior structure of the particles, crystals and the matrix of different materials, became suggestions for understanding .... relationships'. If that hasn't confused you, try navigating around the place. Signs

pointing to 'BMW Edge' are not directing you to an automobile or an edge, but a 'public theatre for incidental daily events'. And I think 'Neo-Pub (Transport)' is a commercial beverage selling operation in the vicinity of a train station, as well as being a 'crystalline volume, formed by...[a] perforated screen facade, embedded into a zinc shard'.

### Critical Mass

Critical Mass, the cycle movement which started with a group of San Franciscan fiends riding home from work together a decade ago, and now a global bike advocacy movement, celebrated 7 years of rides in Melbourne on 29th November. Approximately 700 cyclists braved in-

clement weather as well as Friday night traffic to cause a little non-polluting road congestion. Rides are held on the last Friday of every month leaving from 18 different meeting points all around Australia. See [www.criticalmass.org.au](http://www.criticalmass.org.au) for details.

### More bike news

Why the need for bike advocacy? The latest edition of Australian Cyclist magazine reports one good reason. Using logic not too far removed from car-lobby thinking in Australia, Chinese officials have banned bikes from many major roads and districts in Shanghai so as not to impede fume-belching transport modes. Progress?



# Mulling it over: Jeff McMullen

Reportage journo, Jano Gibson, gives the 60 minute man a taste of his own.

The media on the one hand has the capability to share with the world some of the issues that are facing deprived people around the world, but on the other hand do you think it desensitises people in the West to some of these issues? Has the whole empathy to people who are starving in Africa or anywhere, has that kind of dropped away, do you think, in more recent times?

Yes, curiously McLuhan's "global village" hasn't really made us more aware. There isn't more empathy. In fact the way the media projects the so called "third world", as it's called, as if it's "another", it's a "separate" kind of part of humanity, instead of really being capable of seeing that it is connected, that it is part of us. That's what that version of the global village has done.

And I use that metaphor of the matrix, that it seems to me that we're inside this bubble, and what is projected inside the bubble is very limited. It doesn't really make us feel that this is our responsibility, that this is part of our own human family.

On the other hand, the media, we are the historians of the day. We are the people that have the responsibility, the opportunities, to go out and see really how things are.

The question then is, how do you tell the story in an effective way so that it impinges? How do you shatter the matrix?

Sometimes certain key events do that. I think September 11 2001; Bali – the Bali bombings for Australians. Suddenly its come home that the world is in a troubled state. And if the media uses that time to try and get in to the complexity of things.

I think foreign correspondents are doing that all the time. We un-

derstand that if you've been reading the full coverage of a good foreign correspondent, you know why these people are on the boats, you also know they are not a terrorist threat, and you can also develop a view of what our government policy is towards them. So there is a huge responsibility to get it right.

I think the media generally - this is a huge generalisation I'm going to make - it's a big selling machine. It is actually used more to sell stuff, all kinds of stuff, and one of those items, news, information, even the truth actually, is just another commodity in that big selling machine. That may sound like Noam Chomsky. But the more I've seen, the more I think he's closer to an appraisal of how we actually use this extraordinary technology. It isn't really about revealing, you know, the true state of things, it is partly about selling us things that keep us comfortably numb in the matrix.

You mentioned about events such as September 11 bringing the horror back to home of some of the issues that we face. And during your speech you talked about how indigenous people here in Australia are suffering. Can you share a little bit of what you've experienced on your recent investigations in the northern parts of Australia?

Well, in the 1960s as a very young reporter, I went with some Aboriginal communities. In my 20 years at the ABC I did some reporting in that area. On 60 Minutes it was the very first story I did on 60 Minutes. It was about central Australian Aboriginal petrol sniffing and the problems of dislocation in the communities.

Thirty years later I can go back to the same communities and see that the health of

Aboriginal Australia is worse than it was before all this money was thrown at the problem. You know, what Australia is saying is, well, you know "we've given money. It's their fault. It's somebody else's fault." We haven't asked ourselves, if it hasn't worked, did we go about it the right way?

What I see when I go to the communities and I've been up in

"... it's a big selling machine. It is actually used more to sell stuff, all kinds of stuff, and one of those items, news, information, even the truth actually, is just another commodity in that big selling machine."

the Northern Territory, is that we have never really asked the Aboriginal people how they want us to help. We haven't listened. We've come in like either missionaries or people that were convinced that we knew what was best for these people.

And plainly we've got it all wrong. On any way you want to measure it, the health of Aboriginal Australians has gone backwards in that 30-year period. And now you have a situation where I didn't meet many men my age because the life expectancy is twenty years less than it is for a white Australian.

That's a clear example that even while we have our mind on terrorism, and all of these international threats, right here in our own society we have neglected something. And the scale of this, compared to what I know in Africa, on another project I work on in Africa, where you've got these incredible numbers. Forty million African orphans by the end of this decade. You have tens of millions of people with HIV AIDS. You've got places that have been torn apart by decades of conflict, poverty, environmental ruin.

Here, in Australia, we should have, for a powerful, affluent country, we should have a grip on this, on this urgency that's in the Aboriginal communities. And I don't think the media has found a way to impinge because the general community feels we've done enough. We've tried. It's hopeless. It isn't. There are communities there that are transforming

lenges far beyond what we do. Its going to compound because of the problems plainly because we are going to jump from 6 billion to 8 billion people in less than 25 years. The water supply, we will cross that threshold of available fresh water. So how are you going to invest in security and safety? You've got to pick. You've got to say are you going to throw barbed wire around Australia? Are you going to get a tougher coast guard? Are you going to spend more money on defence? None of that will greatly transform the world or make it safer, more peaceful, a better future for our children. But if you choose strategically, if you like, not out of morality but out of self-interest if you want to be blunt about it, you could say that this approach is a kind of activism. Or a kind of investment that brings very clear results. You will see that if you visit those places the measurable difference.

I don't cringe at the thought of activism, because even the list you've mentioned, whether it's Amnesty International or Greenpeace, it all makes sense to me. It is actually a way of getting through to large numbers of people, and showing that you can transform the world.

I think you do have tremendous power individually to change anything. If you want to change a few things or change the whole damn world you do have to look at your value system. The more I've known, the more I've seen, I'm convinced. Pick a patch and get to work on something you know you can do.

*This interview can be found in its entirety at [www.reportage.uts.edu.au](http://www.reportage.uts.edu.au)*

A new information portal for civil society groups fighting poverty and corruption

## Argentina's alternative information exchange

TUPPY McINTOSH

In our city, the newspapers, the radio stations and the local TV channels are all in the hands of the business sector and they make sure that the coverage reflects their own interests. We hope that "Enredando" will provide a space for information that is generated by the people who never get to appear in the pages of the local newspapers or on the evening news," say the directors of TAU, who recently launched an information portal for civil society groups fighting poverty and corruption in Rosario, Argentina's former industrial heartland.



"Enredando" - which means "I'm part of a network" as well as "weaving a web" - was launched at an event attended by more than 150 people. "We were really thrilled at the number of

people that came to us to get involved in the portal, who want to show what it's like working day by day in a non-governmental organisation in Rosario," said director, Danilo Lujambio.

The current economic and social crisis in Argentina, which has left over half the population in a state of desperate poverty, has made social justice workers' work more difficult and has transformed them once again into a target for threats and attacks by anti-progressive forces.

To promote and support non-profit and social work in Rosario, the site has four sepa-

rate resource areas - economic solidarity, gender, networks and non-profits, and networking and new technologies. The first three areas are all generated and edited by local organisations working in those areas. TAU believes that it is essential that "Enredando" be a place that is built from the bottom up, where the audience is also the authors of the information and the experiences.

[www.apc.org](http://www.apc.org)  
[www.tau.org.ar](http://www.tau.org.ar)

# CLICKS 'N' CUTS \$

MEDIA NEWS BY TUPPY McINTOSH

## French TV prevented from filming in Iraq

29 Nov 02 - The Iraqi government has been criticised for its systematic restrictions on foreign journalists' right to work in Iraq, accompanied by crude attempts at manipulation.

The organisation Reporters Sans Frontiers noted that the government claims to allow the foreign press to work freely in Iraq and wants journalists to accompany United Nations weapons inspectors as a guarantee of objectivity, but that the recent barring of a French television crew belied the promises of transparency.

French journalists of the television news agency Tony Comiti Productions, were denied the right to shoot footage while in Iraq from 9 to 26 November. Despite having all the appropriate authorisations in their possession, they were unable to produce the program for which they had travelled to the country.

Editor-in-chief Cyril Drouhet said the company "did it the official way," obtaining press visas and all of the authorisations required by the Iraqi bureaucracy. Nonetheless, the journalists' attempts to report on the "Oil Road" turned into a farce, and after two weeks of "bullying, censorship and ludicrous pieces of pantomime by the official guide, who changed every day," the two journalists returned home without having shot any footage, Drouhet said.

In Baghdad, the police even barred the journalists from filming garbage on the pretext that "[it was] not good for the government's image." Drouhet added that in the enormous oil refineries in the northern city of Kirkuk, the only person who was authorised to give an interview was an old man, who appeared out of nowhere while the real workers were kept out of sight. <http://www.ifex.org>

## Journalist on trial for treason in Fiji

23 Nov 02 - The state prosecution in the Fiji treason trial will attempt to establish that two defendants, politician Ratu Timoci Silatolu and journalist/publicist Jo Nata, knew about the planned overthrow of the Fiji Government in advance.

State prosecutor Peter Ridgeway in his opening statement said evidence to be tendered during the trial would include phone records that showed Silatolu and Nata were in constant contact weeks before the coup and "so many times on the night and morning" of 19 May 2000.

"There were more than 80 phone calls exchanged between the two during that period," Ridgeway said. "Not only that, the

two were also in phone contact with George Speight and Iliesa Duvuloco. Both the men were aware of the coup. They were party to it," he added.

This is the first treason trial in Fiji, even though the charges existed in the country's statute books. [www.pmw.c2o.org](http://www.pmw.c2o.org)

## Press freedom – a year after the fall of the Taliban

11 Nov 02 - One year after the flight of the Taliban from Kabul, 150 publications are being sold on the streets of the city. Electronic media projects are springing up and dozens of journalists are taking advantage of the various forms of training established by international organisations.

The change is radical. After five years of Taliban domination, which had turned Afghanistan into "a country without news or pictures", the Afghan press today enjoys "unprecedented freedom," says editor Fahim Dashty of Kabul Weekly, the first privately-owned newspaper to reappear after the Taliban departure.

But this freedom has been achieved in the face of attempts to impose control on the part of the new government, which for the most part has its origins in the Northern Alliance. Furthermore, the situation of press freedom is still fraught in certain provinces such as Herat, where governors and warlords control almost all the news media and sometimes use force to muzzle journalists who criticise their power. The central government seems for the most part unable to stop these abuses, which have rarely been denounced by the United Nations. [www.rsf.fr](http://www.rsf.fr)

## China brings in ID cards for internet users to prevent access to forbidden sites

5 Nov 02 - A Chinese province is requiring Internet cafe users to buy access cards that identify them to police, further tightening official monitoring of who uses the Internet and what they do online, a police spokesman said yesterday.

The system was installed in all 3,200 Internet cafes in the central province of Jiangxi last month, said the spokesman, who works with the police computer crime division in the provincial capital of Nanchang.

"This system gives us more power to prevent crimes and identify criminals on the Internet," said the spokesman, who wouldn't give his name.

The system is the latest offensive in China's campaign to discover and prosecute people attempting to reach Web sites that

the government considers harmful or subversive.

Although China has 65 million regular Internet users, the communist authorities are intent on preventing the Net becoming a forum for free speech, as well as blocking access to gambling, pornography and extremist Web sites.

Sites run by foreign media, religious and human rights groups are also blocked, Webmasters are warned to cut off subversive talk in Internet chat rooms, and a special police force filters e-mail and searches the Web for forbidden content. [www.etaiwannews.com](http://www.etaiwannews.com)

## Government shuts down Al-Jazeera office

4 Nov 02 - The Kuwaiti information ministry ordered the office of Qatar-based regional TV station Al-Jazeera to close the day after the station had broadcast a report that a quarter of Kuwait's territory had been sealed off to allow US-Kuwaiti military manoeuvres to take place there. The government said the report harmed the country's interests, while Al-Jazeera editors insisted it was objective and impartial.

"The numerous bans and threats of Arab leaders aimed at the station clearly show their unshakeable solidarity when it comes to contempt for press freedom," said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Robert Ménard. "The Gulf emirates in particular distrust their own people by denying their right to free and balanced news as opposed to official propaganda," he said, calling for the closure decision to be cancelled.

Early last month, information ministers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman attending a meeting in Muscat of the regional Gulf Cooperation Council accused Al-Jazeera of "insulting and defaming" their countries. They called on governments to refuse to give information to it and for public and private sectors to cut all commercial and advertising links to the station.

Al-Jazeera gives air-time to their Arab leaders' opponents and to ordinary viewers and discusses taboo political and social topics. Relations between Jordan and Qatar have been tense in recent months since Jordan accused the station of stirring up unrest in the country and insulting the royal family. [www.internews.org](http://www.internews.org)

## Radio Reporters Create New Approach for African Airwaves

2 Nov 02 - Rejoice Itembu, a pro-



IMAGE: HEINRICH HINZ

ducer and presenter with Namibian Broadcasting, was one of 25 women attending the African Women's Media Center program on reporting on HIV and AIDS in Johannesburg.

During the workshop, Itembu had been part of a team of radio journalists who produced a radio drama about a woman who travels to her family's home to tell them that she is HIV positive. The drama deals with the rejection that the woman faces because of her HIV status. The topic was chosen because many Africans struggle with disclosing their HIV status. They fear that they may be rejected by their families, lose jobs or even become homeless.

"Normally, when we have AIDS-related discussions on radio, they are not very popular," said Itembu. "This time around, my telephone line was flashing like nobody's business. I had experts from AIDS organizations in the studio and they interacted with the listeners."

Radio journalists play a crucial role in bringing the facts about HIV and AIDS to countries in Africa because radio reaches everyone, according to African Women's Media Center Chair Emily Nwankwo, who spoke to the radio journalists attending the workshop.

"Radio is ... the ideal medium to involve communities in their health and livelihoods and also involve leaders at national, community, district and rural levels. Radio is a medium where one's level of education or status is not a criteria for receiving and understanding information or a message," she said. [www.awmc.com](http://www.awmc.com)

## Go Indy Go

24 Nov 02 - Seattle Indymedia celebrates 3 years of fighting the good fight. Today, Indymedia operates in 6 continents networking grassroots media makers and offering non-corporate coverage of struggles, actions and celebrations. Go kids go! Shake yo' local booty at [www.melbourne.indymedia.org](http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org)

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